
Cecil
Beaton's
NEW
YORK

CECIL BEATON'S NEW YORK

By Cecil Beaton

Author of "Cecil Beaton's Scrapbook," etc.

The publication of Cecil Beaton's Scrapbook in 1937 revealed this world-famous artist-photographer as a writer of considerable merit. His critical and observant eye as an artist, combined with this undoubted ability to record his impressions of people and places, makes his descriptive writing all the more vivid.

Cecil Beaton is as much at home in New York as in his native London, and the book is a record of impressions accumulated as a result of many winters spent in the most astonishing and paradoxical city in the world.

He has captured the spirit of Manhattan as only a foreigner can, from a Bowery flophouse to his Louis Seize bed in the Waldorf, from a highbrow party in Harlem to a lowbrow ball on Fifth Avenue.

Supplementing these vivid pen pictures are photographs—many of them taken by the author and all of them carefully selected by him. They reveal New York in all its aspects, the sordid as well as the smart, the hideous as well as the beautiful. Here are no stereotyped views of the "picture-postcard" variety, but a series of illustrations by some of America's most talented photographers, fresh even to a New Yorker in their presentation of his city.

Many of Beaton's inimitable drawings adorn the pages and help to make "Cecil Beaton's New York" a unique contribution to the growing literature of the city by one of its most sincere admirers.

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CECIL BEATON'S NEW YORK.


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CECIL BEATON'S NEW YORK.

Illustrated from drawings by the Author and from photographs by the Author and others

PHILADELPHIA & NEW YORK
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

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MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

To
Mona
With
Love

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PREFACE

MORE incomplete than any other book on New York, here you will find nothing of history, economics, politics or religion. I have not tried to draw the Chrysler Building or to photograph the President. If anyone wants to know about the memorial to an Amiable Child or the Fraunces Tavern, he will find the information in a guidebook at the top of the Empire State Building. This is more a catalogue of impressions, mostly visual, of a place that I know little about. I don't know how a telephone or a car works; I don't know how a city works. You may find mistakes here, in fact the pages may be crammed with howlers, but like any one of the other quadrillions of visitors to New York, my point of view, just because it is individual, may be of interest to someone.

In the preparation of this book, I should like to thank many people for their help and hospitality: I should like to thank Mr. Charles Henri Ford for his enthusiasm on our sightseeing expeditions, Mr. Ivan Moffat for his stories and impressions, Miss Edith Olivier for her advice and help with scissors, Mr. Brian Cook for his indefatigable help in laying-out the pages, Mr. Joseph Cornell for collecting photographs and documents, Miss Dorothy Joseph for her sympathy at the typewriter, Mr. Charles Fry for his constructive criticisms, and the authors of all those books and articles which have helped me to discover hitherto unknown aspects of a city that, with each visit, grows more beguiling and impresses me more.

C. B.

ASHCOMBE
September 1938

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I

ATLANTIC TRANSIT

"GOOD-BYE. Don't be too polite and don't make a fool of yourself. Good-bye. . . . Good-bye."

The ship looks like a hotel, with Palladian lounges, Adam libraries, modernistic saloons, gilded gates. But the stewards, the elevator man and even your fellow passengers seem quite accustomed to it.

Once again you remember how it felt to be a new boy at school. Just as, at the beginning of your first term, you hurried for the comforts of your playbox, now your luggage holds the links with former life. The school atmosphere is accentuated when the steward brings forms to be filled in. "Your name?" . . . Beaton . . . (Major or Minor?) "Where will you sit for meals? . . ." The bugle blows—the summons to dinner. Boat drill harks back to the days of mass physical jerks.

The Atlantic crossing is a unique experience, unlike anything else one has known. Five or six days' solitude is suddenly forced upon one. The sense of time, and time itself, alters. Only someone unusually strong and healthy can treat this upheaval casually.

In the linoleum corridors the sound of hearty laughter recalls the incomprehensible jokes of the seniors in the ears of a frightened fresher. The newcomer sinks into introspection and morbidity.

The cabin is impersonal only until unpacking begins. Then, in a flash, it becomes recognisably your own, and its familiar aspect cannot be altered during the crossing. Although the row of bottles is placed only unconsciously, and the still-life of books and fruit on the dressing-case arranges itself, this cell has taken on your own personality. After the eternity of the trip, you will leave it with a certain regret.

In luxurious liners, life is calculated to attain its highest degree of futility. The underworld of turbines and dynamos is forgotten, sailors are never seen, and the sea itself is ignored. The experience is one that must be undergone by all who meet, winter and summer, on opposite sides of the world, yet the voyage is seldom discussed, like something very private, and the question "did you have a good trip?" is

as disinterested as the answer. On arrival, the reality of it fades in a day.

With so much activity on deck, it is impossible not to look up from your book at the tireless exercise lovers. They stride, mark time, turn about, race round and round the deck in a purgatory of exercise. The children crawl, totter, fall and cry, but their screams are as nothing compared with the noise from the ping-pong tables. The dog man, with self-conscious or ingratiating smile, passes with his charges on a dozen leads, confident of success wherever he goes. The blonde with the perpetual hangover screeches loudly, "Another whiff of the ozone and I'll faint. I'm so weak to-day, when I woke up and heard my voice I frightened myself. Think I'd better go have a drinky."

Faces that you saw on the boat-train platform may have looked attractive, austere, famous, hardbitten; here they are transformed into ping-pong players, lounge-bar cronies, deck-chair sitters, friends of the captain, gamblers, flirts, deck-walkers, tennis champions and drunkards. You may make friends of some of them, but beware of arbitrary friendships, based merely on the fact that your cabin was confused with so-and-so's, or because so-and-so moved to make room for you at the rail as you sailed. These friendships have no real basis and are rarely satisfactory, yet they persist in occurring.

These days of idleness are fuller than days of activity. Letter-writing has become unusually burdensome; ordinary books seem too

heavy; a note requesting a visit to the purser, even followed by a threatening reminder, fails to arouse any energy. An invitation to dine with the captain mechanically produces a bad cold and a solitary dinner in bed.

Lying in fantastic positions, drugged with sleep, mouths dropped open, hats knocked to one side, the sea zephyrs have overcome everyone. An unfortunate is rudely wakened by the glowing touch of a lighted cigarette that hangs to his sagging lower lip. Your musings are interrupted by a stranger who takes the chair alongside, intent on conversation. You realise he is as lonely as yourself; no possibility that this chance acquaintance will be one of those brilliant social stars who dazzled you on the first day, and who you hoped would take a fancy to you—they, alas, are always surrounded by their satellites.

So this, you reflect, is how civilised people choose to live? In spite of diminutive cabins, forever reminiscent of the scene in that immortal Marx Brothers film, men and women are intent on changing for dinner. In spite of inadequate wash-basin and mirror, the bow tie will be knotted; in spite of the ice-water container that digs into the nape of the neck, the chin is shaven fit for a queen; in spite of the

atmosphere that withers the hardiest of *bon voyage* flowers in an hour or so, the ladies will appear with hair curled like tinned anchovies, orchids freshly pinned to a dress so unscathed that it surely could not have come out of luggage. In every one of the five hundred individual cells are played similar scenes, involving lost collar studs, lost pairs of socks or lost underslips, to the accompaniment of the perpetually busy orchestra's dinner selection from "Rose Marie."

Civilised man, awaiting civilised woman and her anchovies, sits in his dinner jacket, reading a light detective novel, sipping an acid martini, eating far too many of the potato chips and nuts that are placed in strategic positions, impossible to resist. In the sanctuary of

the lounge or smokeroom, however, even the detective novel stands little chance in the general restlessness of the flat-flanked horseracing, auctions or of the hat pool. 7.25-7.14. Anyone buy 7.21? A meaningless reiteration of numbers disturbs the nerves.

Only on Gala Night do all these minor distractions make way for one gigantic distraction, when dress bears no relation to current fashion and celebrities beg to be excused from the celebrity concert. The failure of the concert never affects the success of the dance that follows, when the couples, lurching on a swaying floor, wear paper caps, pierrots', jockeys', sailors' and Scotsmens' caps, and blow "shoot-outs" into one another's faces.

Even seasickness would be bliss compared to this obligatory

bonhomie—and the smells encourage sickness. Smoke smells dead and stale, even as one draws at a cigarette. The cocktail corridor exudes a blend of cold ozone and hot linoleum. The alleyways smell of burning rubber, cigar ends and fried bacon. It is too hot in the cabins, for the portholes cannot be opened. The electric fans flay the old, oily air, and you may expect no refreshment from the ventilator which belches forth a warm, exhausting wind. You will have to give up the idea of feeling well, and sit in some windy place, wrapped up, but never warmly enough. And mistrust the steward when he declares that a bottle of champagne would work wonders!

Lying in your cabin on a stormy night, listening to the rolling and straining of the ship, you will hear sounds to remember. Fittings and woodwork creak as the wind and waves heave the ship from side to side. With cracklings like those of a newly lit fire, she leans over, attains a small, tortured crescendo of sound, remains suspended for a brief moment, then quivers slowly back again. The height of the roll brings one of the most satisfying of shipboard sounds. As the rocking and creaking subsides, a thousand small objects throughout the ship, in your cabin, in the alleyways, the libraries, the Louis Quatorze saloons, slither from their positions in a miniature avalanche, the whole resembling the retching of someone at the taffrail—the straining and retching which increases in volume until the vomit spews up and all is quiet. So the ship retches and strains until the distant new noise of sliding and tumbling is heard.

A few days of the ship's movement seems to bring another sense into use—a new dimension has entered life. According to the motion of the ship, to climb up a flight of stairs may be laborious, as if your feet were weighted, or you may rise gently, effortlessly, like a marionette. Balance must be learnt anew.

By the time you have made this strange home your own, and its labyrinthine ways present no difficulty, the steward demands that you fill in a customs declaration, and his smile brings that end-of-term feeling. Stewards wake their charges too early the day port is reached; they panic their victims out of bed, so that for hours afterwards there is nothing better to do than join melancholy queues, everyone asking the same questions and hearing the same answers.

With land in sight, all attempt at gaiety in the

lounge is abandoned. The site of the gala is metamorphosed into the classroom. Could you have dreamed that, on the night of the gala, you saw an indefatigable Scot, dancing on that floor, swing his sporran round to his hip for his partner's sake?

Already, hours from New York, the air has become American—fresh and different. Readjustment has begun in one's system. One's entrails become tight and metallic. Blood and guts change to ethyl and duralumin. One's face and hair feel different and, surely, one's appearance has been transformed. The Statue of Liberty slips slowly by—that *démodée* but magnificent matron, coppery green, like the door-knobs of ancient country greenhouses. The change is complete.

New York, seen from the approaching liner or aeroplane, is at its finest. Not so with London, where beauty lies hidden in lovely squares, in unexpected corners of the City, the Temple, or Westminster. Clusters of shining, metallic buildings, as tall as and taller than the Eiffel Tower, rise before you—ascending fountains of beauty.

A Chicago architect described Manhattan as an "asparagus bed"—sword-like shoots springing from the fertile manure of wealth and dense population. In your first few days, criticism is silenced by the superficial sparkle and vivacity of the place. Two groups of sky-scrapers—the Downtown business section and the Midtown residential section of Gotham—appear unrelated to utility, simply some romantic fantasy specifically calculated to create an emotional effect.

The liner moves slowly up the broad Hudson, accompanied by a plaintive choir of gulls floating on motionless wings, until mournful sirens startle them. The smooth water, cut by the ship's bows, and the impersonal pageant of passing ships seem to belong as much to eternity as some lovely, desolate region where mountains lie still for endless centuries.

Railway ferries, old and grey, laden with goods, rolling-stock and passengers, are the first contact with the daily routine of a continent. They bear unfamiliar names—"Chesapeake," "Baltimore and Ohio Railway," "Erie"—painted in old-fashioned letters of dingy gilt. The stevedores shout as they work—in English, which seems incongruous in such a scene. The incongruity becomes more striking the more one sees of America, for everything is so utterly foreign. Suddenly you become more homesick than you would have thought possible in any English-speaking country.

The contrast between that glittering mass of chromium and concrete towers and these dingy grey giants of ferry-boats is no accident. The

ferries are vestigial evidence of the financial struggles that were waged in that same Wall Street from which those fairy turrets now rise, memorials to successful commerce. The "Erie" railroad, fought over by Jay Gould and a Vanderbilt in one of history's most corrupt financial struggles, at once symbolises the ugly, competitive industrialism and the wealth which forced those towers so high. The ferries may be abysmal, but the offices of their controllers are celestial.

The propellers churn the dirty water as they reverse, a band plays "The Star Spangled Banner" and the ship slides to her berth.

Passengers reappear in the livery of Waterloo Station. Once more they are smart, nonchalant, and you see Waterloo faces which did not appear aboard ship. They are the grand ones who ignored the communal fun at sea.

The customs officials on the dock have a sixth sense, enabling them, at a glance, to detect the amateur smuggler. Yet some of them look so naïve. How could they have dealt with Oscar Wilde who, asked had he anything to declare, replied "Nothing. Nothing but my genius!" Porters, living on their nerves, are like frenzied monkeys, madness in their eyes as they shout, exuding superabundant vitality merely to remain always at concert pitch.

The great noisy void of the docks is without national character. Exhilaration begins only when you leave the pier and its precincts. The taxi plunges forward fiercely into a stream of fast-moving cars. Everything is dynamic. You are excited even by the driver's easy insolence as he spits, talks, puffs a cigar, sounds his klaxon to indicate he is overtaking—which he does in no mean style, on the left and fast at that.

II

FIRST STEPS

NEW YORK appears to be a great city in a great hurry. The average street pace must surely be forty miles an hour. The traffic lights switch straight from red to green and green to red, without any nonsense about orange, symbolising the harshness of contrast that dispenses with the intermediary things that Europeans respect. It is usually unwise to cross the road except in accordance with the green light, and even New York dogs are said to understand this symbol. Americans always know their cue, as they know when to throw in the gear just before the light goes green.

Traffic regulation is simplified by the parallel series of equally spaced avenues and streets, intersecting at right angles, throughout the city. The ground plan of Manhattan Island can never change. Those immovable parallelograms will for ever perpetuate the town planning of its founder, Gouverneur Morris. Broadway alone interrupts the symmetry, as if the architect had suddenly become careless and allowed his ruler to slip, so that this great thoroughfare creates a diagonal gash across the city. Yet it has been said the skyline changes every two months. After the financial crisis of 1929, it was considered, however, that building would cease for a time, that the days of bigger and better skyscrapers were over; but only in respect of residential buildings is this partly true. New York will never be complete. It is a city always in a state of change. The life of a building is thirty years—wear, tear and breakdown. Streets are pulled up, rows of houses ruthlessly torn down, entire new areas constructed. Within the last seven years the whole aspect of upper New York has altered. 1931 saw the completion of the Waldorf Astoria, the world's largest and tallest hotel; the Empire State, the tallest building in the world; and the George Washington Bridge, which spans the Hudson River. In 1932 ten of the fourteen buildings of the Rockefeller Centre were completed. Costing sixty million dollars, linking Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx by a series of viaducts, ramps and depressed


LEXINGTON AVE
E. 37 ST.
ONE - WAY


UBWAY

roadways, the Triborough Bridge was opened in 1936. During the same year, the squalid districts on the east waterfront were landscaped to become the East River Drive; by the end of the next year, the drive was completed from 96th Street to 122nd Street; ultimately, it will extend from the Battery as far north as East 125th Street to connect with the Triborough Bridge, thereby encircling Manhattan Island. Providing an adequate access by car, it will also become a determining factor in restoring the real estate values of the city. In this same year, on the west side along the Hudson River, the Express Elevated Highway (starting on Canal Street, continuing to West 72nd Street), and the Henry Hudson Parkway were opened.

While some of these huge enterprises were conceived before his time of office, their final completion and success were largely due to the vision and determination of Commissioner Robert Moses, whose other public-spirited contributions include the Jones Beach, Long Island, project, the finest public beach in the world, and the Southern State Parkway which leads to it.

* * * * *

New York is a city of perspectives. They are as clearly visualised as in the little Palladian theatre at Vicenza. The distances are as sharp as the foreground.

The streets are straight tunnels beneath mountainous buildings and, with their metal kerbs and tarmac or concrete surfaces, the noise which reverberates from them is unlike that of any other city. The apartment blocks are often made of Manitoba marble or Portland cement, though, functionally, these walls are superfluous, with the Bessemer steel process. Wood is forbidden, even for decoration. The whole city quivers with the universal vibration, and it has been said that "even inanimate objects of art, in hushed museums, move slowly across their shelves in the course of the year."

Why do not all painters flock to New York to paint the ever-changing subtleties of light? Only Rome among cities has a more varied or personal light. Few cloud effects fill the sky which is yet opalescent. But, throughout the day, the same group of buildings can become transformed in the different effects of blue mist, rose-coloured sun and purple shadows. Baroque architecture is said to be, of all styles, the most responsive to the changes of light and shade. Yet the effects of light in the New York streets are unequalled in Spain or Bavaria. These changes have a completely "New World" quality. The shadow

thrown from one skyscraper on to another has the sharp quality of the steel hidden behind the marble casing. It is startlingly dramatic.

At sunrise and sunset the buildings are spangled with pink sequins, and at night the sky becomes, in turn, emerald green, peacock blue, purple and rose red. New York at night is riddled with lights. In the blaze of midnight the moon is given no chance. Shops remain lit all night, refrigerators tick and wheeze, and the offices of *Life* magazine are a distant beacon while the Night Court goes on. There is no risk of stumbling in the dark, on returning to the apartment house; and little need to sleep in an atmosphere so stimulating. So much electricity charges the air, that sudden contact with the door handle or telephone creates a spark; and as you stoop to smell a lily a spark will emanate from its pistil. When, eventually, for lack of better things to do, and because it is past bedtime, you fall asleep, it is without dozing, with no state of semi-consciousness; and when the counterpane slips off the bed, crackling and sparkling as it falls, you wake with equal speed and decisiveness.

To open the window is to be startled by the roar, and the quick descent to the ground floor in the elevator is like landing from an aeroplane, with the singing in your ears. You have to gulp and blow your nose.

It is difficult to find your way about the streets. Few signs help the stranger. In London it is impossible to miss the subway station, or fail to be conscious of the "Ladies" and "Gentlemen." In New York it is only possible to find the dark green stairways unobtrusively leading to the underground railway after they have been pointed out; the post-office is not marked, and I have yet to discover a public lavatory. In England an awning is reserved for a wedding or a party. Here it would appear that every apartment house is in festive mood, until closer inspection reveals that even the "flophouses" advertising "Bed with Shower 20 cents" boast awnings, and one concludes that bums as well as brides are entitled to this extra shelter from the elements. In the streets, one is struck by the *chic* and neatness of the women; everyone is well dressed. Wherever one goes one finds that people really seem glad to meet strangers, and the appearance of rush is readily interrupted by the slightest excuse for leisure. People are surprised by the Englishman's habit of understatement and quiet humour, receiving it with wide-eyed wonder and bewilderment. It is a surprise to the visitor from London to find all the pens-and-ink work in public offices, and the cheerful voices and polite intimacy of the telephone girls are particularly welcome.

Aerial Perspectives
of MANHATTAN

THE GRAND CENTRAL STATION—A marble cathedral turned into a museum without exhibits. One enters into religious quiet by a huge staircase and descends into the nave. No one hurries; no dust, no smoke. Negro porters, and movies for people who have missed their trains

In fact, the overwhelming impression of New York is of American hospitality to visitors; cars are generously lent, the latest books are presented, invitations broadcast and admission to the most select clubs arranged.

* * * * *

Is it an advantage to be English among New Yorkers? We know that it is an advantage in many continental capitals often accompanied by such disadvantages as exaggerated prices in hotels, restaurants, or even shops.

In New York, an English accent may, under different circumstances, provoke hostility, admiration, or pure amusement.

The working classes will probably think an English accent means that its owner is "snooty"—in other words "high-hat" and "snobbish." In another milieu, an English accent carries with it the certification of good breeding, fine manners, and general "European chivalry," such as the readers of magazines in the two-million circulation class associate primarily with foreign noblemen. Seventy-eight thousand very ordinary Englishmen live in New York, but an unknown or untitled Englishman (the terms are synonymous in New York) still warrants a greater interest than any other stranger; and "English Colonial Houses," "English Tea-rooms," and English butlers are at a premium.

In London, by contrast, Americans as such are seldom, if ever, considered remotely exciting or even interesting. They are more common in London than Englishmen are in New York. English visitors to New York are nearly always wealthy people over for the winter season, since a visit to America is beyond the means of the English middle-class tourist. Thus the "English" accent invariably means the "Oxford" accent, which, in fact, only represents a percentage of the upper class of the entire English race. On the other hand, there are numberless Americans in London passing through on a general sightseeing tour of Europe, who are by no means of the same social standing as the usual Englishman in New York.

London, of all capitals, is least cordial to foreigners. In Paris, Vienna, Berlin or New York, restaurateurs and hotel managers effervesce at the appearance of Englishmen among their patrons. One is established in their estimation before they have seen one's pocket-book. The opposite is true of London. So an Englishman must not try to gauge his effect upon Americans in terms of the effect of Americans upon him.

Americans tend, if anything, to like English people better than Englishmen like Americans, and there are not a few who "simply *adore* a real English *axe*-scent." So that there should be no reason for visitors from England to be embarrassed by the sound of their own "accents."

Americans seem to like watching Englishmen in buses, fumbling disdainfully for change, or asking how much the fare is to Fifty-Fifth Street (poor mutts, it is ten cents, of course!), shopping clumsily, or asking the way politely—"I say, could you possibly be so kind as to . . .?" And they enjoy their innumerable "thank you's." It amuses New Yorkers simply because they are English, with their dignity and haughty voices, just as grown-up children are often amused at the sight of floundering parents.

The lower classes, believing in equality but under financial obligations to the wealthy, have developed a back-chatting technique that is the only compromise possible. Thus, it is difficult to be really friendly with the taxi-driver or electrician; at best, a facetious wise-cracking relationship will develop. In Europe, the friendliness between landlord and tenant often assumes the nature of family life.

The New Yorker's attitude to English people is half mocking and half admiring. Many think them "quaint," but with any encouragement, the "hail-fellow" familiarity of policemen, doormen, liftmen, and waiters will be lavished as graciously upon an English lord as it would be upon any guy on the sidewalks along Broadway, which is very nice.

Few Americans realise the romance and glamour which they possess in the eyes of their English visitors.

* * * * *

To the stranger the language seems curiously Elizabethan, with its wise-cracks and poetical similes. It is a language that does not take long to learn; that possesses such vitality that foreigners from every country soon become Americanised in their mode of speech; while New York, with its newspapers printed in thirty-two different languages, has appropriated many foreign words as its own. A posy of flowers is called a "corsayge," a buttonhole is a "boutenyear," and a mixture of beets, small onions and rissolé potatoes is called a "bouquetyear" or a "maylonge" of vegetables. A small cup of black coffee, never in France but always in New York, is a "demmytass," and you will hear someone saying "he is 'auphont' a swell guy." It is a violent language. The English "press," but the New Yorkers "push" a


LOUIS-MANN FIGHT PICTURE
EDEN RESIGNS IN WAR CRIS
AND OTHER NEWS HILIGHT

button, and a large amount is "a whale of a lot." The words "apt" or "likely" are never used, and you hear the inevitable, "he is liable to get drunk." "Like" has taken the place of "as if." "He is a lovely man and comes of a lovely family" seems at first strange to English ears, and a great friend is a good friend whatever his character. I like the use of "gotten" and "guess," and "swell" not used as an adverb, but I dislike "he's overly sensitive." New words are sometimes baffling. The undertaker is a "mortician," but who would guess that at the "pantorium" trousers are pressed?

The slang expressions become more elaborate each year, but certain of them have become a permanent part of the language. Money has become "rope." To the young man who asks "D'yer like dancing?", the cutie replies "I'll buy"; and to the "Let's take a short cut through Gramercy Park," "Oh, there's no percentage in it." "Shut your mouth" is "button up yer kisser." Often several words are combined in one. "Au revoir" becomes "seeinya." The taxi-driver goes to "fifthavenya," and advises you in a hurry to "washyerstep" and "taykadeezy," and the newspaper man at the corner of the street enquires "yessirwaddyuread."

* * * * *

Of the inventors of language, Mr. Damon Runyon, with his newspaper column, is the widest known. An extremely intelligent man, he has managed to convey the way Broadway thinks and talks. The past tense is unheeded. We might easily read this sort of thing:

"As I am standing outside Mindy's, a guy comes along holding on to the arm of a doll, who is dressed up more than somewhat; and we guess that the guy, who looks like a close friend of that doll, indeed, must have more potatoes in his pocket than most guys who walk along Broadway these days, while prosperity is still around the corner, on account of the clothes which this doll is wearing, which, as we have said, are good clothes for a doll of her type, which I guess to be a bad kind and one which citizens without as many potatoes as this guy seems to have in his pocket, would do well to avoid if she gives them the eye, or I'm a tomato."

The attitude towards crime and tragedy is matter-of-fact:

"And as I am looking down on this guy, as he lies on the floor, who is a man little known along Broadway, but who the cop tells me was rather a wealthy guy called Cooper, I feel sorry for the guy, as I see that his neck has been twisted around to a good bit more than

the necks of most guys who have their necks twisted, on account of their, maybe, having more money than lots of other guys; and so I conclude that the guy must have had very strong maws who has played such a nasty prank on Mr. Cooper."

* * * * *

The New Yorker lives in a bright glare or in impenetrable darkness. Either he lives a secret life, or possesses nothing which cannot be discovered at first sight. Europeans live in a half light, with private lives that can be surmised only faintly at first, and into which, in the course of time, one may perhaps be permitted further to enter. In Europe personal intercourse is full of exciting possibilities. In America, after the first interview, little more is ever forthcoming. In England, when turning on the bath, the water may be cold at first, but, by continuing to turn the tap, the water may become hotter. In America, if the water is not hot at first, it never will become so; generally the hot tap flows hot, and at the same rate.

Americans love to talk. Personal contacts in business are more popular in New York than in London. The slightest transaction calls for personal interviews, and the roll-top desk is closed for lunches, drinks and chain cigarettes. The theory, often held in England, that personal characteristics should enter as little as possible into business relationship is not accepted here, where part of the fun is "putting personality across." An extension of the "personal" idea in business is the existence of numerous business clubs and societies where the "boys" backslap, crack jokes and drink or eat at "Get-Acquainted" tables, all subjects to the overlord of commercial necessity.

Few men over twenty-five are good-looking; often those most charming college boys with faces fit for a collar "ad," concave figures, heavy hands, fox-terrier behinds and disarming smiles, run to seed at a tragically early age, and become grey-haired, bloated and spoilt. The rubbery features of these youths do not wear well and develop often into the foetus face, that combined with the red, poreless skin, starched collar and deep, rich voice, produce the only too well-known type of business man. American voices are widely criticised, but in general the men's voices, if monotonous in intonation, have a musical depth and nobility that make foreigners' voices sound ridiculously nasal, high pitched and affected. The vestiges of his Puritan ancestors are to be found in the American man's self-consciousness at carrying a parcel, in his armour of

respectability of well-creased sleeves, star-shining shoes and bowler hat, and reactionarily in the number of burlesque shows he goes to see. He has no talent for relaxation; he goes to the country at the week-end for a rest, but he is up early playing golf, back in time for tennis and a swim, and any odd moments are taken up by back-gammon and bridge. And, of course, he never remembers to switch off the radio.

The men's car on a Pullman train is an institution unknown in Europe. Men sit, spit and smoke together in the mess-room on trains, telling stories about business or women. The Pullman train with its general car, its club car, its women's and men's cars and its restaurant car, with a negro attendant who brushes one's coat at 175th Street, is a cross-section of the institutionalised existence which so many Americans lead. They love to be together in small institutions and sects.

Yet most men live business lives of such concentration that only a fraction of their faculties seem to become developed to any great extent. During the day, they pursue the dollar with a devoted energy that leaves little time or appetite for leisure in the European sense; they often fail to savour the more general social environment in which the women generally become, intellectually, more broadly developed than their busy husbands. In this wider, if more flippant, environment, American business-men are seldom really at their best; the women, on the other hand, require it to display their facility, curiosity, and what they like to be called their intelligence. Glancing lightly and swiftly over myriad subjects with a smattering of glib sense, they cannot develop a theme of any length on one subject alone, neither are they usually called upon to do so. The men, lacking ability to reason and criticise abstractly, carry on the conversation on these occasions by formulas, story-telling, blank contradiction or assertion. They seem relatively unable to sustain at any length a critical argument involving the use of reason, and usually break down the subject by attacking it in the form of an exchange of stories; often a dull and unsatisfactory process. For this reason, the more adaptable, intuitive and informed European may at first find the women more adept than the men at light conversation, versatility and general knowledge.

American men are interchangeable parts in a great economic machine, within whose complexities they often lose the sense of value of life. In spite of energy and enthusiasm, they have little professional interest in their work as such, but only in its aspects as a machine that

turns out more or less dollars, according to how well it is handled. Outside their work, in which there is no development of personality, they have no hobbies chosen by themselves. The Englishman may garden, the Frenchman discuss the world at a café, but many American men hardly discuss politics except at election time, and wake suddenly to find themselves being taxed. They take overdoses of dope in the form of bridge, backgammon, the cinema and fashionable sports; and although the millionaire may spend every available odd ten minutes looking up some point of information in the encyclopaedia, this thirst for culture is usually a superficial desire and is generally accompanied by a cocktail. It is not a genuine quest for knowledge, a passionate interest in any subject, but a desire for culture for the sake of appearing cultured, which is, at the moment, fashionable. It is at best a useless evasion of reality and, as such, becomes a degenerate habit. It is as superficial as is necessary for use in a general knowledge game.

Possibly the speed mania is at the back of all this. The New Yorker has no time for subtleties, innuendoes or real romance. His mind is eaten up with the impatience of watching the red light.

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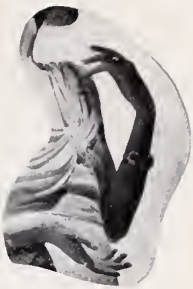
Once, in Hungary, I remember seeing a country wagon, driven by two men and containing a coffin, which was proceeding out of the town towards a remote village. My companion asked if someone was dead at home. The younger man replied: "We have just come into town to do the marketing and we went to see the doctor, and my father-in-law here has been told that he's not got more than six weeks to live. We may not be in again, and to save another journey we're taking the coffin home with us now." This deliberately fatalistic acceptance of the facts of life gives to peasants a personal dignity lost in the hurry of modern existence. The New Yorker's life consists in trying to conceal the facts which lie behind it. Nevertheless, one cannot but love a people that, in a spontaneous outburst, can convert the serious discipline of the office-room to the gaiety of the schoolroom and, for the sheer joy of it, throw out of the windows all the paper they can lay hands on. Even the telephone book, the stenographers' bible, is sacrificed, and those sacred sheets of memo pads, notepaper, bills, envelopes and letters swing their zigzag way down to the caverns below. The effect is as if a flock of birds were released from every window, as if a bridal couple were showered with confetti.



Glamour Girls

One of the regulations, necessary in a city of skyscrapers, is that nothing may be thrown from the windows; yet, on these occasions, rules are made to be broken, and eighteen hundred tons of paper were thrown from the windows in honour of Colonel Lindbergh in 1927.

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Although in 1844 "Bishop Benjamin T. Onderdonk was tried by a court of bishops for 'immorality and impurity,' for being caught petting in a buggy," to-day, among the younger men and girls, light flirtation, as is known, is extremely frequent. It is superficial and begins young; so that American girls have a worldly wisdom often surprising to Europeans, and are not easily carried away by flattery or by the love affairs into which they may enter.

As intrinsic a part of the evening's entertainment as gardenias, theatre and dance band is the pantomime in the taxi. To take a girl home in a taxicab without kissing her is often considered to be an insult on the part of the "escort" (a term very current in New York). Even if she may not desire it, for a girl to accept an invitation to dine and go on out afterwards with a man usually means that she will tolerate the making of "passes" on the way home.

Again, the speed mania is responsible for dispensing with the usual formalities of courtship, and produces an enormous number of hasty marriages. At a cocktail party, a girl and boy, introduced to one another, seemed not particularly interested in each other, yet left the party together, drove into the country and were married on the basis of a few hours' acquaintance. The secretary of the head of the B.B.C. in New York announced one night that she must leave, as the previous night she had got married to a boy she had met at a party an hour or two before.

That the number of divorces is, consequently, higher in America than in Europe does not mean that the standard of morals is lower. In the old world, it is still a point of honour *to keep up one's position*, and love affairs must adapt themselves to that. Here, a change of heart necessarily brings about a change of circumstances.

There are hardly any tarts in the

street—none in the fashionable quarters. The system is different—more the "cutie and the sugar-daddy" idea. At any rate, tarts don't accost. The initiative is more with the men.

As dead men in a cemetery are hidden by catafalques of wreaths and flowers, both real and artificial, so this rather deadening effect of modern life on human nature is concealed in New York by the manners of society, which are more exaggerated, if less effective, than those of Europe. In a drawing-room, men will rise too often when women come and go. The general rules of behaviour are rigidly adhered to, and Mrs. Post's book on etiquette is as strictly interpreted in Gotham as the Koran in Mecca. Every morning a newspaper carries an illustrated feature called "the Correct Thing," and many books will teach you from which side to approach your chair at the dinner table; while the courses given on "how to become charming" show that charm is largely a question of manners. Competitions are held whereat children from all parts of New York vie with each other to become the politest child in Manhattan, and demonstrate their courtesy before judges. Miss Baker, aged thirteen, from the Lower East Side, when she wants a drink and her aunt is in conversation, always says, "Excuse me for interrupting you, dear Auntie, but may I please take a drink now, for I am thirsty?" Miss Baker was warmly applauded by the other competitors and was declared the politest girl in Manhattan.

Books on manners have been popular since the early 'seventies, when Miss Hartley, in her etiquette book, wrote: "Thank gentlemen who give you their seats on omnibus or cars. This is not countrified, it is ladylike." In 1882 an editor issued a proclamation concerning the use of the table napkin. "The rule of etiquette is becoming more and more thoroughly established that napkins should be left at the

house of the hostess. It should be left beside the plate, where it may be easily found by the hostess, and returned to the neighbor from whom she borrowed it for the occasion. If, however, the lady of the house is not doing her own work, the napkin may be carefully jammed into a globular wad and fired under the table to convey the idea of pampered abandon."

Godey's "Ladies Book" counselled a young girl never to let her partner assist in "holding up her dress when dancing." "If a lady discovers that her partner is a good waltzer, a neat way of complimenting him would be to throw out the suggestion that he had probably been abroad."

To-day it is considered impolite, after the food is cut up, to use the knife. Yet Henry the Eighth's habit of eating a chicken leg in the fingers is still employed. A napkin is served with the cocktail and biscuit, and once again the timing of the American is perfect, for the egotist at dinner, just before putting a clam into his mouth, takes a deep breath and says "Moreover," knowing there will be no time for interruptions before the clam has disappeared.

The general attitude is one of *bonhomie* and good fellowship. In American justice the suspect is considered guilty until he is proved innocent, but in society the opposite applies, and the New Yorker's national expectation of good intentions is only damped by manners so bad that to disregard them is an impossibility. A foreigner, not realising this, may often take offence where no offence is meant, for the kidding and wisecracking is apt to be baffling. It is significant that, instead of saying "Give my best regards—Give my kind wishes," in New York they say "Give her all sorts of messages," which to the foreigner has an ambiguous tone. Introductions are broadcast in a breezy plethora. In Europe, if a third party comes up to talk it is not necessary to introduce your friend to the new arrival, making it obligatory for your friend to bow to this third party on future occasions. Not so in New York, where, if the introduction is only muttered, the third party will challenge with, "I did not quite catch that name. How do you spell it?" But as the average American is highly trained in paying attention to detail, introductions will generally be efficiently performed. Names will be correctly pronounced and correctly repeated; and the least intelligent New Yorker is acquainted with many accurate, topical facts and statistics.

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Dickens said of American women, "the ladies are singularly beautiful." For *Life's* Beauty Contest in 1901, Charles Dana Gibson drew twenty beauties, as indistinguishable to our eyes to-day as a litter of the best spaniels, and they were no more typically American than the English Gibson Girls. But the New York ladies of to-day could never be mistaken for any other nationality.

The fashions of to-day do not create beauties; in fact, beautiful women are at a disadvantage with the current tendencies, and Schiaparelli has given the golden apple to the *jolie laide*. You will see the typical New York Venus tottering down Park Avenue, with pallid, poreless, kid-glove skin; large mouth, flamboyantly painted; hard, bright eyelets; well-constructed jaw; high cheekbones; and flowing mane of hair. She wears the uniform of neat skin-tight black dress, fresh little cutlet frills at collar and cuffs, a row of pearls, loosely hanging mink coat, excessively well-cut new shoes and a mad hat (with perhaps half a bird on it). Her features are well defined, if not of the classical order. Her nose will have a sinus bump on the bridge.

Can it be that the rock of Manhattan, this very ground itself, is responsible for the Indian elegance of to-day's New Yorkers? The women have legs, arms and hands of such attenuated grace; wrists and ankles so fine, that they are the most beautiful in the world. With their long, square-ended fingers (each joint marking a separate compartment of usefulness), their bloodless hands, blue-veined, of a veal-steak whiteness, and their long shaft-like legs, hitched to a high waistline, stenographers, shop assistants, millionaires' wives and follies girls alike give the impression of aristocracy and fine breeding. Among most peoples middle age is quickly betrayed by hands and wrists, which develop an appearance of weakness and uselessness, and so demand a generous covering of cuff. But the hands of the middle-aged New Yorker require nothing of the sort. However much in other respects his contours may be growing flabby, his hands remain firm and expressive. The American has fingers plied slightly backwards, and the functional gestures of

a grave and noble people. (I know of no one with more beautiful hands and hand gestures than Miss Julie Haydon, the actress, who used to work in a Chicago Woolworths.) This slim elegance is, indeed, a natural product of the continent, for thoroughbred horses, when taken to America, develop such slim, attenuated legs that the breed has continuously to be renewed with stallions brought from Europe.

To the Englishman, at first sight, the New York ladies appear hard and awe-inspiring; but he will realise when the next boat comes in that the English beauty does not transplant well, and looks strangely dowdy and badly constructed in such surroundings. The English rose, fading a little, and still seeking glamour beneath a brim and heavily painted cheeks, loses her literary quality or old-world charm, and merely looks drab.

American women accept the current fashion in voices as readily as the latest clothes. A few years ago, it seemed that it was fashionable to be hoarse and raucous. The "Hawiiaghyurrs" were thrown deafeningly around the restaurant and dance floors, but now, the sophisticated debutantes, those strange glamour girls whose aim it is to look like torch singers, speak in breathless, powdered voices—invalids succumbing after their last cigarette.

Beauty is common, and therefore many women cultivate brains as well, but they all do it in the same way. There is even a standardised laugh, made by screwing up the nose and lowering the corners of the mouth. Two women, having luncheon together, do not waste any airs and graces on one another. They smoke steadily over their carrot purée as grimly as two business-men in a club, yet they practise untiringly the technique of entertaining. "Have I told you this story before?" one will ask as her listener's eyes wander. "You're sure? Because I know lots of others."

New York has produced two very distinct types. There are the Amazons, giantesses all made to scale. They stride like lionesses, their sand-coloured manes escaping from a Buster Brown hat. Then there are the wiry weaklings, their porcelain perfection ruined by a

self-inflicted spinal curvature. They complain of their hangovers, yet inhale cigarettes that never affect the heart or harden the arteries.

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How cold it can be in winter! The sky is sunny, but at each corner lurks the scimitar of draught. And how sudden are the changes of temperature! One may go confidently to the theatre without an over-

coat to find arctic conditions prevailing by the end of the last act. In an hour, the snow can fall so heavily and freeze so quickly that parked cars become embedded by the sidewalk. The Removal Squads roar out into desperate action, knowing how much harder will be their task as the hours continue to pass. When the ice becomes steel and pickaxes are of no avail, only a rise of temperature can make the roads safe for the traveller.

The policemen's ears are covered, pet dogs wear coats, chauffeurs fur coats. But one turn of the swing door and all is changed. No

further energy need be expended on keeping warm; the steam heat, which obliges one to wear tropical clothes indoors all the year round, suddenly dries the skin, in this passage from the freezing atmosphere. The inside of the nose feels crusted, so that one longs to pick it. The heart throbs and bangs as if for release.

In intense cold, the metal framework of the George Washington Bridge contracts, creating a rise of three feet in the roadway, at the centre of its span. In hot weather, due to the expansion of its giant cables, the centre is twelve feet closer to the Hudson than in mid-winter. With its grey lines and trellises, its silver spokes and curving girders, this bridge is like an exquisitely complicated cat's-cradle of steel that leaps into the immensity. Connecting Manhattan Island with New Jersey, it is one of the most beautiful of man-made objects. To defray the cost of building, fifty cents is charged for crossing the bridge by car, and it cannot but be fortunate that funds ran out before the intended decorations could be added. Its extreme and unpretentious function-alism makes it a supreme example of modern engineering.

Though New York is probably as dirty as any city, it does not look so, for the New York dirt is gritty and less clinging than the greasy dirt of London. The atmosphere looks so clean that only your finger nails prove that it is not.

A typical sunny day gives the effect of pristine clarity. The wind blows in unexpected gusts around the corners. At Twentieth Street a woman in a racoon coat and white tennis shoes is waiting for some-thing, and, as if for her especial delight, as reward for her patience, a long strip of cellophane ribbon, escaped maybe from a factory window, is flashing in tortured swirls before her. In the gusty breezes, it forms arabesques in the true baroque manner. In the sunlight it flashes like a knife, like a swordfish. Incongruous in the setting of hard poverty and utilitarian emptiness, against the relentless brick walls, the torn posters, the overflowing refuse cans and spattered pavements, this quicksilver phe-nomenon is as beautiful as lightning, with as little affinity to this world.

In the high wind shirts, pyjamas, underclothes, sheets and other ghostly manifestations of pink, mauve and white people flutter on the lines, garlanded from window to fire escape. Each day the washing takes on a varying personality. To-day the effect is good; the gusts make the empty clothes dance gaily, and there are many of them. Another day they are sparse in number, and they hang, elongated and forlorn, flapping dolefully.

Although New York has more windows than any other city in

the world, it has no window life. In Italy, a large part of the day is happily spent leaning on the window-sill. When Spain was a land of peace, much of her social life was carried on from the balcony. A dance in a London square brings neighbouring footmen, housemaids and passers-by to see the waltzing figures pass lighted windows. Tweenies in curl papers gaze dreamily down into lamplit squares before going to bed. Yet here, in New York, never a face is to be seen at the numberless windows. Only when one passes them in a train do these illuminated frames show any life at all—a family in shirt-sleeves, eating its evening meal in full view of the plumbing fixtures; a couple dancing half-heartedly to an unheard radio; a man, like a wax figure, studying an unseen mirror as he shaves his latherless face with an electric razor.

To assure himself that New York is beautiful, the pedestrian must crane his neck in crowded streets, and perhaps doubt still remains. Yet only from the windows, making the buildings into great honeycombs, can New York be seen at her most beautiful.

Perhaps New Yorkers cannot find time to look from windows. Perhaps it is only on Sundays that they see the pale yellow sky, the sunset of rose and opal, and the pigeons. A distant flock of black, brown and white specks vanishes completely each time it wheels back and forth over the same three blocks of skyscrapers. Soaring, dipping and weaving in unison, the pigeons repeat, continuously, their conjuror's trick of disappearance and reappearance, until their leader drops to rest on a rooftop, where an Italian boy comes to feed them.

Instead of raising vegetables on the garden roof, business and pleasure are combined by selling squabs and keeping pets. On the roofs in cages, locked up at night, the pigeons are let out at intervals during the day for exercise. The Italian boy knows his pigeons by name and recognises them even in flight. Sometimes he takes them to Brooklyn, whence they will fly straight home. The life of a pigeon owner is an exciting one, for piracy adds to the difficulty of keeping the flocks intact. Sometimes a straying pigeon flies away, near to a roof where a rival collection lives. With a long pole to which a white flag is attached, the rival owner waves to attract the pigeon, or sometimes he will send out his own flock to surround the vagrant, which, should it be lured into the enemy's camp, must submit forthwith to having its wings clipped.

It is curious that, in the most modern of cities, the most ancient form of messenger service should be employed. At the half-time siren

at distant football or baseball matches, a flock of pigeons will be released to fly with the latest photographs of the match back to the roof of Mr. Hearst's building Downtown; and I believe that the latest Paris fashions are flown from the Atlantic liners straight to *Harper's Bazaar*.

Though New York is perhaps its real self in winter, he who visits it at this season only knows one aspect of the character of the people. An integral part of life in winter is the bustle, restlessness, anxious pace and striving for efficiency. All this changes in the torpid heat of summer. People walk more slowly, talk more quietly, idle away an afternoon. It is difficult to believe that the bleak, sand-coloured tracts could become so green. Central Park is unrecognisable with its idylls of people in swings, in rustic arbours, children feeding the ducks and lovers lying under the blossoming trees. Flowers live their short lives in gallant profusion.

Indoors, the thick carpets are rolled away to show cool, shining floors, and chintz covers replace the pretentious effects of Louis XV. Not only does the Waldorf become positively cottagy and the hotel managers resemble the chorus of a musical comedy in their white flannels, but everyone relaxes. They become different people from those we knew in the winter; even the dollar is hunted with less zest. In the tropic heat, New York becomes a big summer resort. Businessmen wear holiday clothes, removing their coats. Workmen sleep on their backs, in the sun, on the roofs. Roofs become penthouse gardens, locales of Health Centre exercises, and neighbours in shorts do desultory jerks on the parapet. Hotel roof gardens, which are not out of doors, are artificially made to seem so. Every piece of unused property becomes a tennis court, and people ride in the Subway with golf clubs to Van Courtland Park.

With daylight saving, daylight dining begins, and an orchestra plays the March from *Aïda* at night in the Lewisohn Stadium. Everybody is sunburnt. Those who must remain in the city think only of trying to keep cool. Sweat pours from the forehead, neck, waist, temples and arms, as in a steam-room; and several times a day the shirt must be changed. Children lie naked in the streets, waiting for the watercarts to come past and spray them. Journalists fry eggs on the pavement. People go to the cinema not so much to see the film as to feel the violent chill of the air-conditioned movie-houses (and very likely to come out with pneumonia). Another cold bath is drawn; even the ice-cream no longer tastes cool, and there is nothing for it but to leap from the window.

All who can, drive out, as early in the day as possible, to bathe and lie in the sun. On the road leading to Jones Beach the cars are jammed in a small jerking progress. The girls from the five-and-ten-cent store, and the elevator-men, on their way to bathe, call back and forth good-naturedly while waiting in the traffic blocks, eating "Good Humors" and drinking Coca Cola from the wayside stands. Amateur fishermen go out in little boats deep-sea fishing. From the big liners you see small craft studded solid with picnickers and their fishing lines. On to mile-long beaches the sea tosses beer bottles and orange peel; and on Sundays, thousands of hikers climb along the Palisades. Excursion-boats of lovers go up the river to Bear Mountain to the camps provided by the city, with dancing on board to tinkling music.

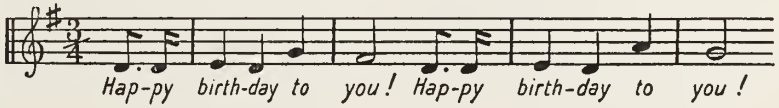
Every Saturday and Sunday, eight hundred thousand people come to bathe at Coney Island, reached by subway in half an hour. I went to Coney Island with Jean Cocteau one night. It was as if we had arrived at Constantinople—the electric bulbs silhouetting the minarets, domes and turrets, illuminating the skeletons of the scenic railways and Eiffel Towers. The passengers on the roller-coasters, rending the air with their concerted screams, were so many muezzins calling the *azan*. Cocteau, like many great personalities, manages to create a world of his own wherever he goes, so vivid and personal that those with him can share the surprises of his impressions; and one wondered why the popcorn had never been put to use as confetti before, and why one had not realised that it must have been he who designed the waxwork booths of magic and squalour combined, the backgrounds of the "quick-time" photographers and the unique architecture of the "Haunted House."

III

MECHANICS OF EVERYDAY

A MORNING in a New York hotel is full of surprises. The old man rings for his coffee, and a rose is sent up on the breakfast tray. With the "good morning" greetings of the hotel pasted to the front page arrives the spinster's *Herald-Tribune*. In a large elaborate box that raises expectations, packed in pleated nigger-pink tissue-paper, the young man's old shirt is returned from the laundry.

I was a newcomer at the Waldorf Astoria, and one morning was woken by the telephone-bell. "This is Postal Telegraph speaking. A personal call for Mr. Beaton. Is Mr. Beaton there?" "Yes, speaking." "That is Mr. Beaton?" "Yes" (rather nervous). Suddenly music rang out, a pretty lilting voice entered my bedroom in this charming and unexpected lyric: "Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday, dear Seeserl, happy birthday to you!"



Blushing I lay, telephone in hand: ought I to produce a graceful repartee? Before I could decide, the voice of the efficient operator snapped: "That was from Margaret Case," and hung up.

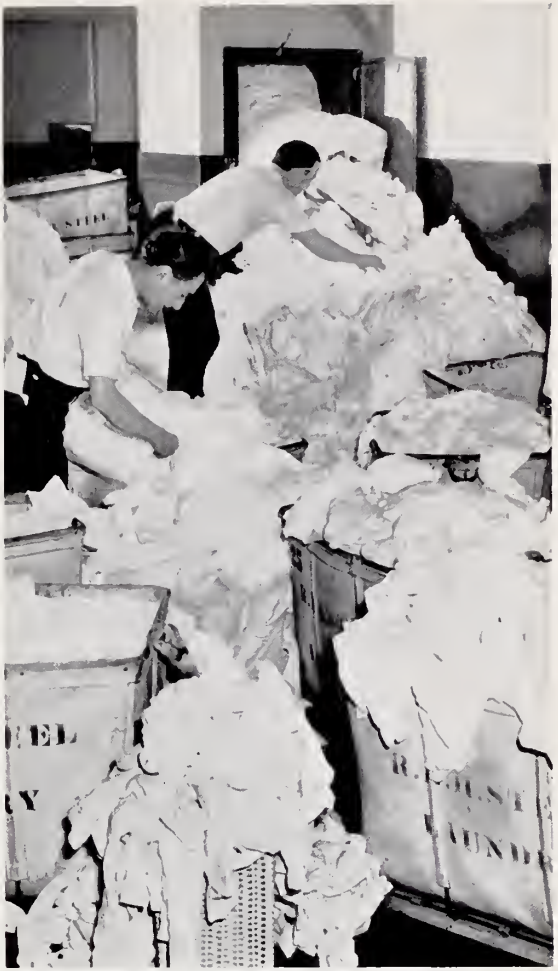
New York has three hundred and twenty thousand rooms for rental each night. Of its dozen principal hotels, each has at least twenty-five hundred telephones and fifty miles of carpet; it consumes enough butter, milk and cream to equal the produce of five hundred cows, and its elevators travel one thousand two hundred and fifty miles a day. The Waldorf Astoria is the largest and tallest hotel in the world; 27,000 tons of steel were used in its construction; over eighteen hundred employees are uniformed; and four thousand keys are lost each year. It would be possible to live there throughout the year without sending out for any purchase. In its London equivalent, to get an evening paper, a messenger-boy probably has to go down the street to wave for one. If a request were made for a more obscure magazine, heaven knows how it would be produced. When asked why a news-stand is not incorporated, the concierge will explain "Our guests would not care for one. Even the theatre ticket-office is considered an eyesore." In the lobby of the Waldorf, however, men with fat cigars are telephoning, sending radiograms, or buying anything from flowers, drugs, jewellery and books to cruise tickets. They can even have their pince-nez mended (the American does not wear horn-rimmed spectacles) and, during Convention Week when the hotel is converted into a vast grotto of lilies and forsythia, do not be surprised to come across, at the top of the stairs in the centre of an admiring crowd, glistening in its coat of turquoise paint, the latest automobile.

Miss Foley, the Waldorf housekeeper, has over two thousand rooms in her household; with 30,000 face towels and 54,000 sheets in her linen cupboard, her laundry bill must surely be excessive. Each day over 60,000 pieces of linen are sent to the wash. In this vast, modern, efficient hotel, that employs "every possible comfort-bringing, labour-saving device," it would seem that even used razor-blades must find some utilitarian fate. What becomes of them once they are dropped into those accommodating slots in the bathrooms? Perhaps they reach the world again as part of the steel chassis of a motor-car? Or add just one more steel drop to the ocean that goes to make a girder, forcing the world higher still to the sky? But no, enquiry reveals that Miss Foley allows the blades to lie idle behind the slots, waiting for the day when the cavities have been filled up before finding a use for the discarded relics.

The Days

WASHING

Waldorf Astoria



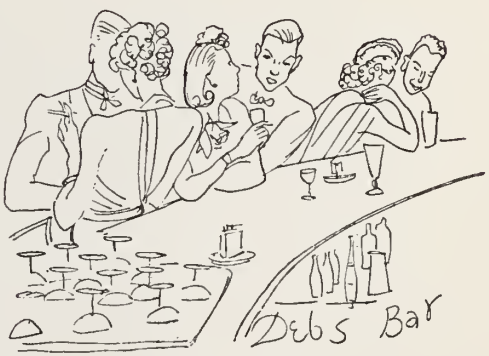
Subway Ride


SODA · CANDY
ICE


3 10
3 10
3 10
3 10
5c
2 for 5c
5 CENTS
3 for 5c

The Waldorf service is so efficient that on occasions one wishes it were less so. You telephone for breakfast, but it is too early in the morning to find it easy to answer the resultant string of questions. "What sort of tea would you like, sir? Orange pekoe or green or black? And would you like cream or lemon? Oh, milk. And toast? Would you like it dry or buttered? Wholewheat or rye? You're very welcome, I'm sure." And the night-watchman is sure to have bolted your door, so that there is no possibility of the waiter coming in with the tray until you have got out of bed and opened it yourself.

Of the other fashionable hotels, the St. Regis has pretty French rooms, with tall patisserie'd ceilings; and the Ambassador, recovered at last from the "bank-quake" shock, has now settled down to a quiet and elegant middle age after a dazzling youth, which was denied the Hotel Pierre. The Savoy Plaza gives an effect of ostentatious speed. The Astor Hotel is more like a terminal than a place to sleep in. The Algonquin is old-fashioned with good food, and is frequented by actors and journalists. The Gotham is solid, and the Plaza, too, is of an early period, with palms and string quartettes in the lounge, gesticulating mahogany-work, and horsecabs waiting outside. The effect of the Murray Hill Hotel is completely Edwardian —the goldfish have swum in their dark pool for fifty years, and the Nottingham lace curtains hang lifelessly at the windows. The Brevoort and the Lafayette, characterised by their superb cooking and lack of decoration, are so old-fashioned and afraid of contamination from the hubbub that they are situated far from the heart of the city. So many friends have arrived with their families at the Gladstone that the atmosphere is more like that of a house-party. New York hotels are so accommodating that the frightened spinster can go to the Martha Washington, that gloomy subject for ribald jokes, without fear of meeting a man in the hall, or "the clean man" for a dollar can go to any of the Mills Hotels.



At five every evening, each skyscraper downtown disgorges simultaneously its population of ten thousand or so workers. They

must all reach their homes as quickly as possible. This is the purpose of the Subway. Those thousands of mountain-dwellers suddenly become subterranean travellers speeding away from their deserted offices. It is a "rush hour" of an intensity unrealisable in England, and it is met by a wonderful feat of traffic organisation. If you are a newcomer you are sure to get lost on the Subway and arrive at Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, ten miles away. There are few officials to direct the wayfarer in this maze of different routes and entrances that are obviously not intended for strangers to understand. The Subway is dirty and untidy, and gives the impression of having been left over from the New York of O. Henry's youth. The subterranean platforms are sparsely decorated with advertisements of beer and toothpaste, because people are in too great a hurry to look at them. The trains rattle along at ghoulish speed, and at every corner the passengers sway like corn in a storm, content to know that they are travelling by the swiftest method for a nickel. Some crank has worked out that it is possible to travel 600 miles a day in New York for a nickel by riding continuously in the Subway. By boarding a train at the age of 21 and alighting at the age of 70, a New Yorker can journey 10,731,000 miles on a single fare. This works out at 2,146,200 miles for one cent—probably the lowest transportation rate in the world.

As you walk off the train the warning reads "Watch your Step." Sinister pictures are conjured up by this advice.

Most New York buses are operated by a single man, combining the functions of driver and conductor. Above his head is a notice: "Please do not address the Operator while the Car is in Motion." No wonder; for not only must he drive through a fast-moving mass of traffic, but, simultaneously, he must open and shut the doors with foot levers and give passengers their change. The passenger drops a nickel through a small hole from which, by a complicated course, it proceeds through a glass box and lies there for all to see. Now the operator opens a trap door which tosses the coin into an elaborate testing-machine. When it has successfully passed this ordeal, he decides to release it on to a shelf before him, from which he picks it out to be placed in one of the series of tubes conveniently at hand. Out of these he can subsequently select any change he requires. This lengthy process continues while the bus is in motion, although it stops every hundred yards down the avenue. Fifth Avenue buses are double-deckers, with a separate conductor who points a pistol-like instrument at you. When you have recovered from the shock, you thrust *ten* cents into its nozzle, for here the price is twice that on the other routes.

The taxis are bigger, quicker and newer in New York. They leave twenty years behind London's jerky boxes of cracked mackintosh-leather, smelling of old stables. Owned by various companies or independent drivers, usually painted a yellow-ochre, they are fitted with sight-seeing roofs of glass, heaters that become effective at a moment's notice, flashing rows of lights on the roof, a buzzer to indicate to pedestrians that the car is in reverse, and radios. Though often unrecognisable, and sometimes hung upside down, a framed photograph of the driver accompanies his registration card. Every nationality is represented by the most outlandish names. Jesus Romero, driver 151914, Cab 5580; or Abraham Ashconzari, Sam P. Kupperblatt, Mihram Shishmanian, Isidor Schlamowitz, Michael Tuohy, Israel Zaslaveky, Meyer Markowitz, Pietro di Lucia, Solomon H. Popernow. The best drivers are usually Italians; the Irish are slow and sullen; the negroes are obliging, but childishly clumsy. One driver is rude; another, if encouraged, tells dirty jokes; another boasts his relationship with a well-known family in London; another turns in his seat and tells you: "My last fare was a sort of a nut. She told me to drive very slow and carefully because she said she had just taken a laxative, and then she said she thought we had better stop altogether and she got out in a rush and left me waiting. I thought

this was a kind of a gyp, as the meter ticked up so high, but the little lady reappeared all right and she paid me off at a dollar twenty and thanked me very much." Another driver jerks his thumb back: "See that guy? I drink up his port—imported most of it. Sure, I got a bottle on ice right now. He's got some of that tawny stuff, but I prefer the Californian. Sure, that's right, I guess it cools better."

Taxi-drivers know few addresses. At home they must go to the School of Knowledge and the Scotland Yard School for London drivers. A certain geographical knowledge is obligatory, and it is possible to say "St. Stephen's, Walbrook" or "the Trocadero." But here, few have brought with them their little books of reference, and they only understand numbers, so it is no use saying "Carnegie Hall" or "Maxine Elliot's Theatre", for they probably will not know in which block to find it.

The rate is twenty cents the first mile and five cents each subsequent mile, which works out at one cent per block. Perhaps it is the greater distances that make this means of transport seem more expensive than any other in the world.

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Even Paris cannot compare with New York for the entertainment value of its shopping. Cocteau talks of the inspired rubbish in the drug-stores, and the big department stores, the best in the world, are vast honeycombs of temptation. Full of surprises and new inventions, nothing over a year old is of interest. And who cares if nothing lasts? The *souks* of India and Morocco are no more fascinating than the stalls at Macy's, where copies of Fabergé cigarette-cases cost a dollar. It is the place for people with Cartier tastes and Trois Quartiers means. Books and medicines are cheaper there than at the druggists or libraries, and a genuine Venetian mirror is less expensive than it would be in Venice. Hammacher Schlemmer produces a fantastic variety of household inventions: a gadget to put under the pillow (here called a cushion) that plays a lullaby; and a knob to be pressed beside the bed on waking in the morning whereby the window is automatically closed. It is not surprising that Miss Greta Garbo should furnish her personal wardrobe from the Californian branch of the Army and Navy Stores, for these clothes, made for garage mechanics, stevedores and dock labourers, are as inexpensive as they are

romantic. Michelangelo himself might have designed the football sweaters, the coloured leather coats and the elaborate wind-breakers. From the shop that sells only books on the history of boxing, from the butterfly store, from the popcorn and nut counters (perhaps with the image of Abraham Lincoln in pecans) to Lord Duveen's collection of old masters too grand to be exhibited in the shop-windows, and the Hammer Galleries' treasures of Imperial Russia, New York shops are a maelstrom from which escape is almost impossible.

The window-dressing is one of the city's chief features. Each new fashion lives brilliantly, but dies an early death, in the shop-windows, as the seasons of the year pass prematurely. In this clean, new world Christ is born in November, and Bergdorf Goodman have robbed surrealism of its novelty before Dali's new exhibition.

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Just as New Yorkers are ruthless in discarding last season's face or dress, so they hold no sentimental feeling for their possessions. There are no attics in New York. Since addresses change so often, each move necessitating an entire redecorating scheme, and since that indefinable thing called "taste" seems to be so elusive, the professional decorator reaps great gains from her clients' lack of assurance. Interior decorating was invented as a profession by Elsie de Wolfe; and a slump in certain stocks, a suicide in the family, or merely a divorce, are enough to change a normal woman into an authority on Empire settees, Sheffield plate, Adam fireplaces and flower prints. These ladies have their lairs by the dozen along Madison Avenue, only the grandest achieving an address on 57th Street.

"After all, what right has she to set herself up as an authority? She's got no knowledge, she had to wire to Syrie Maugham to help her out in her *own* vestibule. I have been at this job close on four years. I've studied it, I know the rules; I can put a thing through (you just see me with the contractors!) But everything *she* does has to be done over, and she's so careless, people are beginning to find that out. You must give me I'm thorough. This piece of material had to be specially dyed, and mind you, I had eight coats of paint on that room before we got it to go exactly with the *petit point* and the cauliflowers on the commode. Now you must leave me, I've got a lot to get through this morning."

Around her desk the secretaries wait with their notebooks. The

young architect with his rice-paper leans forward: 'Could I full-size this cornice again for you?" The machine-gunfire starts anew: "Sure you could, and you Miss Schwartz, send a telegram about the five-inch perimeter of that circle, and read me over that letter about the laminated columns. Now then, Miss O'Connor, check up out of that, you've mixed up your sentence, *incised* not *inserted.* And what about the Rendering? No, the blue-print is for our records, unless, of course, he wants any amplification. Put that whatnot behind the door in Mrs. Seton-Fredericks' solarium, and telephone the gallery and tell them I've left a gap in Mrs. Rhinefleischman's drawing-room that simply cries out for that Renoir, and thank them for getting me the job."

Of the hundreds of interior decorators, a dozen are competent to tackle such large jobs as did Mrs. McMillan in furnishing the New York Hospital or the Women's Cosmopolitan Club. Mrs. McMillan has, perhaps, the most serious clientèle; Mrs. Tiffany, whose biggest jobs have been done for Mr. Vincent Astor and the St. Regis Hotel, ransacks Ireland for its Empire beauty. Mrs. Ruby Ross Wood, who has taste and knowledge, has also much experience. Mrs. Tysen has five floors resembling an English country house and a collection of fine silver. Mrs. Tuckerman Draper, with flair, has made Hampshire House into a bower of chintz roses, and in Miss Rose Cumming's vast junk-shop some of the loveliest things can be found among the mess of *bric-à-brac.* Pendletons' windows also are always gay and provoking.

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Since Oliver Cromwell's twelve years of vinegar rule, English cooking has been proverbially bad, yet nothing can be better than plain English produce well prepared. In New York the food is intrinsically tasteless, and, in order to make it appetising, skill is essential on the part of every cook. Even before it went into the refrigerator the waterlogged lettuce-heart would have tasted of little but paper, but the cook, knowing it is up to her to make the food palatable by the concoction of sauces and titbits, reserves her highest flight of fancy for the lettuce. Unrecognisable under its sousing of Russian dressing, it is squashed beneath half a pear on which is balanced a slice of pineapple. (Or does the pineapple come under the pear?) A pinnacle of cream-cheese coated with cayenne pepper balances on a prune, and on the summit stands a cherry or a grape. The temptation of the American cook is always

to drown the sensitiveness of the palate with these highly seasoned mixtures, and the individual oyster stands no chance against the tomato-ketchup.

The American has his food everywhere, but comparatively few meals are served in the home. Dining-rooms hardly exist. A city man never goes home for lunch and, rather than have a cut off the joint, will have a snack at a grill or sandwich-bar, or at the nearest Childs, with a glass of butter-, malted- or acidophulous-milk. He takes his meals fluidly, for his coffee and iced water are served simultaneously with the soup. The coffee is weak. The tea, wrapped like

lavender in a muslin bag, is bad and the water never hot enough. The English hide at their meals as if they were doing something immoral, but here, in broad daylight in a window, the American eats his sea-food, his olives and celery and his salad course. New Yorkers were the first to eat icecream when it was sold by Mr. Hall in 1786, and grown men will never lose their liking for it. But of first importance to the American is the cleanliness of his food. Sugar is hermetically sealed, biscuits are done up in cellophane, sandwiches wrapped in grease-proof paper. The waiters at Childs look like dentists or operating surgeons in their white overalls. Perhaps this is

why New York is one of the few cities in which white eggs are considered preferable to brown and are paid for at a premium.

At luncheon time, the counters at the drugstore fill up with customers. There are forty dishes from which to choose—"smothered chicken, grandmother style," "grilled frank on toasted roll," "tuna fish, sliced egg." Fruit-pies, sandwiches, soups and sundaes appear in gastronomical disorder along the counter.

Dostoevsky describes a favourite trick that was customary in Russia. When the temperature was a sufficient number of degrees below zero, a victim was invited to lick an axe, to which his tongue became automatically frozen. So the lips of the patrons of New York drugstores appear to remain permanently attached to the rims of glasses containing the freezing streams of chocolate to which they subject their tired stomachs. Just as in Mexico food is peppered to excess, so in New York all drinks are over-iced. Ice is as much an obsession to the Americans as curry to the Indians. One cannot but feel an overt sympathy for the old man on the baby's high-chair who thus for forty years must have been corroding his alimentary canal and stomach. The helpless gut suffers, unheeded and unfelt, for the momentary pleasure during which the frost passes into the throat.

Some Americans proudly announce that they have never eaten in a drugstore, and it is true that there is something innately disagreeable about perching at a counter to despatch a meal in five minutes. One feels that time should be taken in preparing food, that a proper meal should come from a kitchen and be eaten at a table, that it should not be hastily thrown together as one watches. The activity at the gas-stove, the fusion of certain recognised ingredients served with iced water or a Coca Cola, does not seem to be cooking in the gastronomic sense. Drugstore food tends to be tasteless, but the drugstore is ideal if at any moment one is feeling vaguely hungry and wants something more than a bar of chocolate and a cigarette. The club-sandwich is probably one of the best products of the "synthetic meal" mentality—the gastronomic equivalent of the skyscraper in architecture.

In Europe, where sweets, books, lunches, medicines, alarm-clocks, rubber goods and cigarettes are bought at different places, the drug-store would be inappropriate. But in America, the familiar red neon sign of "Drugs Soda" in every town and village represents the centralisation and "service" that makes one feel New York such an easy place to live in.

Dandy Cats


Creamed
VEGETABLE
OMELETTE
Potatoes
Bread & Butter
30¢


Cafeteria

DRUG. STORE.

SERVICE.

Few of America's "soda-fountain clerks" have either the intention or the desire of remaining such for long. The soda-fountain, feature of every American drugstore, is often merely the overture to life for these youths who despise "soda-jerking" as such. That is why so many surround themselves with an aura of intellect coupled with virility, expressed to their customers in a crackling backchat, with some knowledgeably epicurean remark thrown in here and there.

The girl on the stool beside you orders a Chocolate Milk Shake. The clerk bustles about in starched white apron and glengarry, pouring the ingredients into an aluminium mixing-can, his manner efficiently scientific. The concoction is served with a glass of iced water, a paper napkin, a cellophane-wrapped biscuit and straws. The straws sink into the brown foam and the liquid rises up them, through the rounded lips and down the avid gullet. The jerker watches intently. "Laikert?" he asks confidently. The girl goes on sucking. "Well, say something," he persists. Smiling only with her eyes, vaguely and easily, without coyness, she says: "Oh, I give it O.K." The jerker professes chagrin at her indifference and tries the intellectual touch. "Well, what's your conception?" he asks with an amiable wink at the doctor, waiting for a prescription.

"My conception is you oughta be doin' better'n joikin' if this is all you can turn out."

"Sure, we all oughta be doin' bettr'n soda-jerkin', eh, Doc?"

* * * * *

The Automat represents a high point in civilisation. Here, *en masse* yet in pleasant conditions, people can eat well at surprisingly small cost.

England's equivalent would be a restaurant with greasy table-tops, coarse and chipped crockery, a severely limited choice of un-nourishing food, almost inedible, served intermittently by defiantly tired waitresses.

The Automat has a clinical cleanliness—the tables are washed continuously, even the slots through which the nickels pass are polished many times a day. Around the marble walls are rows of dishes, an infinite variety of food, each a still-life framed in chromium.

Apple-pie rests in one brilliantly lit frame, in the next a rich slice of raisin cake, in another a three-tiered sandwich, neatly wrapped in

cellophane. How much more appetising to see such food than to read smudgily printed descriptions on a pasteboard menu. An arrangement of russian salad, cold slaw, cream cheese and saltines is yours for two nickels. Another nickel brings a cup of coffee, in black and foaming-white jets, in exactly sufficient quantities, from a golden spout; or a pot of freshly brewed tea, shooting into view on a swivel like a conjuror's trick, placed there by the unseen hand of the Trappist monk-like attendant. Returning with the booty to the table brings a feeling of pioneer satisfaction and an interest in the display of individual tastes.

The variety of food is limitless. Men in hats and mufflers gaze blindly ahead as they eat, for ten cents, strawberries in January, *leberwurst* on rye bread, a cut off the roast, huge oysters, a shrimp cocktail, or marshmallow cup-cake. To be able to walk out without wasting time in further accounting or interminable waiting for bills gives a pleasant feeling of freedom.

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No foreigner exiled in New York need remain at home for his national atmosphere. He is certain to find, somewhere on Manhattan, a restaurant to transport him to the gastronomical delights of home, whether he be from Canton or Bucharest, Stockholm or Marseilles. The alien has his choice of Hungarian restaurants, Turkish, Russian, Greek, Armenian, or Syrian with their *paklava* and honey sweets. In the Hindu restaurants the coffee is thickly Turkish, the bread is Bengalese, the meats are spiced and skewered, the fruits and flowers candied. He will find that the Ruby Foo, on Broadway, has the most delicious soup, made from the spittle of tubercular birds, and other equally imaginative, well-cooked foods, characteristic of the lesser-known Chinese *cuisine*. He will find German restaurants where initials are gouged into scrubbed wooden table-tops. At Luchow's, with frescoes of *The Ring*—goose-fat serving as butter—the food is as fine as any in Germany. In Swedish restaurants he will find arrays of *smorgassbrod* extensive enough to hide a billiard-table. He may eat Indian curries while he listens to nostalgic Indian melodies played on pear-shaped instruments, or sit in an old pew eating mutton chops and Stilton cheese at the Olde Chop House on Cedar Street, with sawdust on the floor and violins decorating the walls. Most of the English restaurants are of the "Olde Worlde" variety. Almost every

nation is represented by at least one restaurant, with its native atmosphere and speciality.

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The New Yorker has little taste for wine; hardly surprising, perhaps, since few wines taste well in his city. But he loves to drink for the effects of drink. Of the countless, oddly named brands of liquor that he buys, few are good. The best beer is canned, but beer is surely never the same in a can? The cocktail served before dinner is strong enough to carry him through the ice-water age to the haven of the whisky and soda afterwards. Serious drinking is reserved, in full earnest, for the weekends. Each Saturday evening brings a run on the liquor stores. Gin is cheaper than whisky, but it is "Gimmernothascotchernsodugh" that the drunkard reiterates. It is curious that no theatre possesses its own bar except for soft drinks, and during the few minutes of the intervals, obscure bars down the street enjoy a brief, but inflated, popularity. No liquor is sold on a Sunday morning, even in an hotel, and when the bars are opened at one o'clock, queues have already been formed of people with hangovers, wishing to pile Pelion on Ossa.

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American newspapers and periodical publications will soon eat up all the forests of the world. One issue alone of the *Saturday Evening Post* consumes twenty-four wooded acres. So many and so varied are America's magazines that some people have neither the time nor the inclination to read anything else. But who cares? For the average man, a judicious selection of these magazines can provide liberal amusement and adequate intellectual stimulation. From the solidity of *The Atlantic Monthly* to the incisive humour of *The New Yorker* there is a wide field. In theatre and book reviews and newspaper criticism, Mencken and Nathan, with their wisecracking form of attack, have been superseded by thicker and faster wisecracks. They are indirectly responsible for Mr. Winchell, whose influence, in turn, has spread throughout the country and into England's *Daily Express* and *Daily Mirror*.

Practically no law of libel exists in America; it is almost impossible to bring a suit against a newspaper and, although English

journalism is comparatively controlled, it is through American influence that we are able to hear, months in advance, when Princess Juliana is in an "interesting condition." The photographic horrors of murder that appear in the daily "Tabloids" originated in French newspapers, and *Vu* and *Voilà* were the forerunners of *Look* and *Life.*

The press must, if it is to maintain its circulation, forever be in awe of the inarticulate sanction of large minorities. In the last hundred years the population of New York has been swelled by many different nationalities whose feelings must not be hurt. Their existence forces the editors to a certain policy. A newspaper can express strong political views, but it cannot show racial or national prejudices without losing circulation.

Headlines are the apex of American journalism. The newcomer to New York is completely bewildered by them. Their language would baffle the builders of the Tower of Babel. We read "Policeman becomes Love Thief," and that King Edward VIII's Abdication is the "Greatest News Story since the Resurrection." *Variety*, the theatrical magazine, is a coiner of language, and only initiates can understand the mint for new phraseology. This headline from it:

STOKI AND GARBO ARE NO. 1 HEADACHE TO PHILLY RAGS

means: The rumours of an engagement between the famous conductor, Mr. Leopold Stokowski, and the famous moving-picture star, Miss Greta Garbo, have become so incessant that the patience of editors of Philadelphia newspapers (Mr. Stokowski was at this time conducting in Philadelphia) were tried to the point where their heads were beginning to ache from the strain.

Again we read:

CHI THANKFUL FOR TURKEY DAY HYPO; AWFUL TRUTH SOCK 42,000, EBBTIDE—BANDS, 30 G, DAMSEL 27 G

Which means: Chicago cinema exhibitors are gratified by the stimulus which Thanksgiving Day celebrations gave to their business. Among the most successful films being shown at the time were "Ebbtide," "The Awful Truth" and "Damsel in Distress." The amounts of money that their presentation made are indicated by "sock 42,000, 30 G and 27 G." It is only necessary to add that 27 G stands for 27 Grand, or 27 thousand dollars.

LONDON QUENCHERIES FREE PIX; EXHIBS SQUAWK; BREWERY ADAMANT

is a condensation of the information that public-houses have aroused the resentment of London cinematograph exhibitors by showing free films to their patrons in the tap-room; nevertheless, the breweries sponsoring the entertainment are determined to pursue their plans, regardless of any such protests.

STICKS PIX HICKS NIX

Or in other words: Inhabitants of hick-towns (i.e. small provincial towns) do not enjoy seeing movie-pictures about the rough country, such as forests, deserts or other rural regions of adventure.

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The New Yorker aims at creating a tradition of American humour in the manner that *Punch*, for its antediluvian readers, provides a sense of continuity in British humour. Whereas the London of George VI, for *Punch* subscribers at least, differs little from the London of Edward VIII, the New York of President Roosevelt and Mayor La Guardia has less in common with that of President Hoover and Mayor Walker. Yet in its thirteen years of life *The New Yorker* has not changed. It is just as difficult to get one's bearings, to discover the desired column of "Race-track Information" or "Court Games" (not, as one might imagine, *le roi qui s'amuse*) among the wads of advertising space. Though his Whoops Sisters have apparently been buried, Peter (Constantin Guys) Arno's doorkeepers, peppery colonels and cabaret girls still appear, diminishingly American in type.

As an antidote to the lengthy jokes of *Punch*, *The New Yorker* gives us the one-line joke. *Punch* still revels in such humour as:

The vicar enquires after Farmer Giles' ailing wife.

"Well, surr, she's only taken one dose of the medicine the doctor gave her."

"And why is that, Farmer Giles?"

"Well, you see, surr, it said on the bottle TO BE SHAKEN BEFORE DRINKING and my wife, she don't take to being shaken, if you see what I mean, surr."

New York readers could not cope with that sort of thing. But whereas the jokes are pointed and concise, the editorial pages are patched with snappy bits of information about the city, full of irrelevancies that, for their cumbrousness, are equally dull or amusing as the case may be. You will not have come across the following vignette, but you might have if I had not written it.

ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTE

> "We got a tip last week. A bird-fancier, just back from Java, telephoned to say he was living at 3476 Lexington Avenue —phone Milliacuahontas 26510. (We heard he hadn't been to Bali, but thinks of going next year). For two days we couldn't bring ourselves to act upon this piece of information, as we were too lazy listening to the man practising the accordion on the floor below. Finally, deciding that we had probably, after all, got something there, we took the Interborough Uptown (arriving in time to see the Goodyear Blimp B M C 2 pass over the Center). Though the fancier was out, we were allowed to look at the *Xonyphous Phoenicius* (long-billed duck-drake) by the landlady (we had in our pocket a guide they gave us up at the Natural History Museum, the time we went to see the Teddy Roosevelt Memorial). We decided not to wait until the fancier had eaten, for we ourselves hate to miss our daily blue-plate at Roths, however much we enjoy a look at our feathered friends now and again. So, raising our hat to the landlady, we said we'd be back maybe next year."

Bright, robust, superficial and friendly, *The New Yorker* is in many ways admirable. Surrealist humour from Benchley and White follows Mencken's driving satire. James Thurber is an unique product. His drawings and short stories of troglodític humanity are alike brilliant, both invariably concentrating upon the war, declared and undeclared, between men and women. Great men are made human by the use of facetious prefixes, Signor Dante, Mr. Shakespeare, while the Maid of Orleans becomes Mlle. Jeanne. *The New Yorker* evokes some odd psychopathological questions. Why, for instance, does it so emphasise the whimsical or "sissy" qualities of navvies and old ladies? Freud may know.

The New Yorker directs the smart "Park Avenue" attitude to life and the arts with determinedly facetious results. "The revamped

orchestra turned out to be the best band that the house has harboured for years. The strings have acquired an unwonted Schmalz, and the horns, which once could be relied on to make funny sounds at tragic moments, have become generally well-behaved and euphonious." . . . "Mr. Vogel was a real novelty—a baritone who sang Alberich instead of grunting and snorting him. He seems to be what the doctors have been ordering for the Metropolitan, for he doesn't confuse vocal villainy with villainous vocalism." . . . "Miss Marita Farell's debut as the offstage Forest Bird was a case of 'better luck next time'." That is Mr. Robert A. Simon, *New Yorker* music critic, on the opening of the opera season.

The New Yorker knows what is "the thing" that "everybody" is doing. By "everybody," judging from the advertisements, it means people who go on cruises, play fashionable sports, sit at an "armchair radio," buy expensive luggage or opera-hats, lunch at the Louis XIV Café, prefer Peerage or Coronet Sherry, and consult the Swedish Princesses' Cook-Book. How these merry pages would enjoy burlesquing their own shopping tips! We read that Mary Chess "is having particular fun with her bath mitts, filled with castile soap and herbs this year"; that of Matchabelli's scents, "women cry for Duchess of York and Ave Maria. The recent Infanta is dry and haunting"; that "Yardley has a devastating way with scents . . . and, of course, our British cousins have ever been inimitable with lavender."

Not only do we owe the paper a debt for some of Dorothy Parker's neatest "cracks" (many unpublished), and the schizophrenic drawings of Thurber, but an equally great debt for the work of Helen Hokinson. Her portrayal of the humour of middle age, both touching and charming, is always a joy. These infinitely respectable and refined, unweeded widows, who tackle, always in profile, the newest innovations undaunted, are easily recognisable to foreigners who have seen them culture-cruising abroad. Helen Hokinson shows us these bird-like, bird-hatted ladies who, despite the middle-aged spread, will not say die in a bewildering world of shops, clubs, lectures, cruises and beauty parlours. Oh, that we could have Hokinson animated cartoons in the Disney manner! What delight to see these top-heavy ladies walking on those neat, spindly legs!

Fatter, glossier, more self-important is *Esquire*, pronounced "*Ess*-quire." The American expression "Rah-Rah Boy" is used to describe a certain type of college youth who watches football-games in

a big fur coat and a pork-pie hat with a bit of feather in the band, and shouts for his team as he waves the college pennant from a stick. The trained fan-choruses shout "Rah! Rah!" (At particularly rowdy parties the Rah-Rah Boy may shout at intervals the approving slogan "Razzle-Dazzle!") He probably drinks heavily, drives a sports car recklessly, dances ecstatically, flirts continuously and reads little. *Ess-quire* or *Esky* (*the* magazine for men) is his bible. To understand the psychological appeal of *Esquire*, it is necessary to understand the connotations of its title in many American minds. The word Esquire denotes the country and the healthy life. It implies dogs, country walking-sticks, tyrolean hats, yachts, shooting (or rather shooting-sticks) and an undefined rural gentility with an aristocratic, nay, almost British flavour. The fashion-plates purport to bring to attention the changes in men's fashions; to inform of the latest quirks of fashion in Europe and England. *Esquire* shows what one must wear to be original, giving undue importance to petty changes in men's clothes. That coat-tails are broader this season does not mean that all Mayfair rushes to the tailor, who alone would be aware of this detail and, without the clients' knowledge, would incorporate it in new suits. Englishmen dress to please themselves, and as a rule scorn brown-faced dinner-jackets, snappy-brimmed stetsons and *risqué* neckties. The fashion-plate drawing shows a type never seen in America, and to-day rarely seen even in the most old-fashioned St. James's clubs. There was one classic plate—a collection of briar pipes, dog leashes, leather vests, deer-stalkers, golf shoes, wooden models of Scottie dogs, hawthorn sticks and other such chance accoutrements—the lot proudly labelled "Foibles and Fancies of a Country Squire" (*Rah! Rah! Please obtain!*). *Esquire* also supplies slightly risky cartoons (wife versus secretary or pretty housemaid) that recall *La Vie Parisienne* tricked out as something hearty and virile. The fiction seems oddly incongruous, finely written by the most interesting of younger American authors, while the best names in journalism contribute illuminating and intelligent articles on matters of current moment. Of little interest to the more callow American youth, *Esquire* sells to the tune of six hundred thousand copies an issue.

Just as glossy, if not so cumbersome, are *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. *Vogue*, a *de luxe* catalogue of fashion, contains an astounding amount of material in each fortnightly issue. Voraciously, it allows nothing of the current mode or social interest to escape its

ravenous appetite for *chic*. For years the best contemporary photographers have worked for vast salaries, and the result has done immeasurable good in promoting commercial photography of the highest calibre. (Gone are the days when the photographer had to pay his sitter—Sarony paid Bernhardt 1,500 dollars.) Demeyer brought a romanticism to the relentless medium of the camera, only to go too far with soft forms, retouching and the mistiness of tulle, thereby causing Steichen to swing back the pendulum to a realism that has become essentially American. To Mr. Condé Nast, the proprietor of *Vogue*, we owe a debt of gratitude for his peculiar union of art and fashion. He has made many discoveries, including Demeyer, Steichen, Huene, Claire Boothe and Erikson, a Dutch-American living in Paris, the best fashion artist of to-day and one whose work collectors of contemporary art do wrong to ignore. Mr. Nast has employed many people, and everyone he has employed becomes a friend for life.

Harper's Bazaar, the thorn on the rose in *Vogue's* hat, has at last acquired a personality. It appeals to those more remotely if less seriously interested in fashion. It is stacked with innovations. Even for the pages that have not succeeded one respects the attempt at freshness and a different angle on the so limited world of commercial fashion. The most intellectual writers supply fiction, and its premise that every one of its readers has heard of Magnasco, appreciates Rimbaud and possesses at least fifty-thousand pounds a year is flattering.

Mr. Harry Bull does the difficult job of editing *Town and Country* with such enthusiasm and intelligence that he makes an advantage of the handicap of having no spectacular staff. Without the exclusive use of exceptional writers or photographers he produces pages that, if too promiscuous, have an enormous vitality and variety, and no one issue resembles another. Mr. Henry Luce, the white-headed boy among publishers, was justified in paying the hundred thousand dollars which he is said to have spent on the title *Life*, for none other would be as apt for his alert magazine. No trick is missed, every opportunity is taken. Many people are unable to swallow *Life's* stark reality easily, but a certain amount of brutality is presumed to be healthy. The staff-photographers are trained to cover each subject with a camera instead of a pen—not only photographically but intellectually, dramatically and psychologically. This astonishing series of documents has influenced other magazines, yet no attempt is made to make it an art magazine. Mr. Luce's *Fortune,* selling at a dollar a copy,

is the advertising medium for those with enormous purchasing powers. Full of graphic information about big firms and economic statistics, it is famous for its surveys of "who smokes what," or "who votes for whom." It portrays the mechanics of a civilisation.

Life shows us what we can see, *Fortune* analyses what we cannot see. *Life* shows the outward scene, *Fortune* shows "the forces behind." Less people read and like *Time* than look at and like *Life*. *Time*, with mongrel cunning and cleverness, yaps at the postman, snaps and bites. It utilises backstairs information that is always accurate and spares no feelings in creating its brilliance. Every reader feels it may be his turn for a roasting one day.

Time has invented a new technique of writing which gives even triviality a general importance, and by which it is possible to be rude with such seeming innocuousness that by now its editors are generally surprised at the resentment it sometimes inspires. A particular form of provocative and personal title-caption has been created by *Time*. Under the photographs we read:

"Conductor Reiner loves Spaghetti"
"Professor Alma Neill, her rats got stiff necks too"
"Cinemactor Smith, shaggily impressive"

Time's style is here attempted:

"*Cinemagnet producer visiting England on vacation. Hard-working polo-amateur Hiram B. Goldfleisch from Oshkosh, who, by welding Sven Schnitzel's Bluemoon company to Izzy Rosenbaum's still-born child, soon startled cinegoers in four continents to attending in their thousands his million-dollar musicals and Thimblina Stincke extravaganzas.*

"Goldfleisch received from press-Baron Rothermere's eldest son, Esmond Harmsworth, swank stag dinner gathering, which a hundred English notables attended, ranging from scarlet-faced John Graham Hope De la Poer Beresford, 5th Baron Decies (married, *en secondes noces*, to widow of H. S. Lehr), who founded incometax-payers' society, unselfishly to protect Britishers unwilling to contribute more than their share to saturnine Chancellor of the Exchequer, ex-Attorney General, King's Counsel, Sir John Allserbrook Simon, to Henry, Duke of Gloucester. Producer Goldfleisch, at first surprised at such honour, soon took it in his polo stride, observing, 'They certainly did hand it me!'

"Strutting happily with wife Amanda and children, Hiramma,

Hiram *II* and Hiros through London's pompous home of exiled royalties, Hotel Dorchester, producer Goldfleisch enjoys more adulation than Americans who may have achieved distinction in Art, Science or Commerce. Hiram, who started at the age of two selling babies' comforters made of woodpulp to his nurse, has made a career which astonished Hollywood magnates, and now, together with Samson Z. Klupperblatten, holds the blue-ribbon of success in Hollywood, California, not to be confused with Hollywood, Maryland or Hollywood, Mississippi. Producer Klupperblatten, married to Lucy, daughter of arch-magnate Esau Fitzherbert, relies more on artistic (*sic*) than commercial results, *v.* "Funny Bone," and brother of Samson, George Washington Klupperblatten's recent sparring with Greta Maytrees titillated Hollywood's dove-cots."

Time's political News Summary is snappy and clear. Its imitators in England completely lack the lustre of this unique magazine.

Look describes itself, perhaps unflatteringly, in its own advertisement which appeared in *Esquire*:

"This is typical of 'high-pressure news-digestion.' Just as the drug-store has replaced the inn or restaurant for the leisure-despising millions, so the 'at a glance' news magazine has replaced the journalism of thirty years ago. Ideas have been replaced by mental pictures, editorials by snappy subtitles.

"Editors, recognising that people no longer have time to pore over columns of type, have now changed formats to include more and more pictures. To-day Life is different. *Look* is geared to the fast-moving tempo of our times. 8,000 words of text could not equal the clear-cut, indelible impression which *Look* leaves with five or ten squeeze pictures. *Look* is a word-saving, time-saving, high-reader-interest magazine, edited for busy people . . . people in the 'age of achievement,' too absorbed in their work to wade through page after page of text."

Which explains why 2,000,000 people take *Look* home in the evening.

Each month brings on to the news-stand a fresh crop of startling ten-cent picture magazines. Stimulated by the success of *Life*, *Click*, *Pic* and *See* show us an eye operation, the downfall of

a good girl, a motorcar accident and the death of a bull-fighter. The Moving Picture magazines now have their own yellow journalism. The Candid Camera craze has invaded the world of retouched negatives, and now *Screenguide* and *Photomovie* give us realistic and often unattractive revelations on the "Poison Glamour Stars."

A dozen pocket-edition magazines have appeared since the success of the *Readers' Digest*, which describes itself as "an article a day from leading magazines in condensed permanent form." *Coronet* has the additional attractions of coloured reproductions of old masters and the sort of photographs that appear in albums of the "year's best photography." Though actually printed in Paris, but under the same auspices as *Esquire* and *Coronet*, *Verve* is the most beautiful of all art magazines and the most expensive. It is to be prized as was *The Yellow Book* of the 'nineties. *Harper's* and *Scribner's* are planned for the benefit of cultural clubs, with no particular policy but to make good light reading. The reviews of books in some literary magazines are intended merely to sell the books, so that the magazines have become little more than trade-sheets, without definite policy on the part of the reviewer, who is, therefore, a routine publisher's agent.

The Partizan Review is a magazine of the Advanced Guard. It has broken from blind adherence to the Soviet Union, which was fashionable among the intellectuals until the Trotsky trials. The *New Masses*, run by hysterical Stalinists, does not stop at conscious exaggeration and, like the communist *Daily Worker*, plumbs the extremes of childishness. *College Humour* is for callow youth; *The Bride's Book* is for hopeful girls and old maids. I have yet to discover the appeal of *Ken*. Hundreds of other magazines have a more specialised policy. *Staff*, for example, is surely unique, "published for the household staffs of homes, estates and yachts." Here is all the pantry chat, with titbits about Mrs. Harrison Williams' maid, Helen, or Mrs. Astor's butler, Brook. "Among those leaving for the sunny south last week," we read, "was James Colby, chauffeur to Mrs. Forrest P. Lindley"; or "from Philadelphia comes the good news that George Harvey, valet to Mr. John R. Hume, suffered only slight injuries in a recent taxicab accident."

* * * * *

On Sunday, with breakfast, comes a huge and sphinx-like bundle of papers, neatly folded, layer on wad. Breakfast waits the investigation.

Daring Detective
DEATH MOLLS
College Humor
vogue
ART NEWS
LIFE
TIME
PIC
Physical Culture
SCREEN GUIDE
THE NEW YORKER
CLICK
Mercury

Sunday Morning.

The Days News.

A curious smell emanates from the bundle, remotely peppery, which turns out to be *The New York Sunday Times*—"All the News that's Fit to Print"—*all* of it. Interested, I begin on the first section, determined to scan rapidly the General News before beginning on breakfast.

It is all very lively; so much is happening. But there are alluring advertisements to trap the unwary—sunny pictures of Palm Beach, priceless fur coats, evening dresses "created in Paris only last week," shoes, hats, and pretty names like Saks and Bonwit. I prop myself comfortably on the right elbow, breakfast forgotten as progress continues steadily through the first section's 56 close-packed pages. Several headings give one to think—milk has been slashed to nine cents, someone has "earmarked 18,000,000 dollars funds," the "sunshine-men stay out." But too much of the *Times* lies ahead to allow time to ponder.

Another section, more general news, more headlines that are only vaguely intelligible to the foreigner. Obituaries, news of mails and ships, wills, estates, plaintive appeals in the Lost and Found columns. I have accounted for 68 pages, trying to remember how many London's *Sunday Times* could offer and deciding two dozen at the most.

Section Three lands us in Wall Street, ten pages of financial and commercial sensations. The strain on the outstretched arm begins to tell, and I relax a little, giving Section One the chance to collapse its bulk on the bed-covers. Little interests me in the Letters to the Editor, for, in spite of their pungent terms, I cannot take sides in these battles of which I know nothing. Weekend cables and a maze of special articles help me to the Review of the Week's News, and so out of section Four.

Reading this gigantic newspaper becomes a sort of game or endurance test, a task a Spartan mother might well assign her son if she lived in New York to-day. The elbow tingles and I consider a change of posture, only to realise the absurdity of the idea when I see that sections one to four have taken complete possession of the other side of the bed. To move them would mean upheaval. The game begun, retreat is impossible.

Twelve pages of Sports News, bold headlines largely incomprehensible, pictures of a great American football war in progress, armoured warriors arrested in unbelievable attitudes by the camera; horses, dogs, harriers, a ball-game—and so on to News of Society. Dishes to tempt youthful palates at sub-debs' parties, fashions for all

ages, all sizes; a gallery of those strangely depersonalised young women who appear in pageants for charity; a "Bal de Fête for Lighthouse Eye Clinic to be featured by showing of coiffures"; "Rebeckah du Bois Bows to Society"; someone is to be an attorney's bride, someone else is to be honoured by a "shower"; debs are planning a tea—and, with a great subsidence, the News of Wall Street, the advertisements for Palm Beach, the footballing warriors, describe an ungainly arc between bed and floor.

Irritably I acknowledge the fact that women's clubs have an active week ahead of them, that passion-flowers prove hardy, that gardeners are well looked after by the editorial board of the *Times*, that "Mrs. Grace Coyle will speak on Flower Arrangements According to the Zodiac at a meeting of the Garden Department of the Women's Club of Great Neck on Monday at 3 p.m." My spine aches intolerably and I take time out, deciding to make a rough count of the number of pages offered by this Sunday colossus. Thirteen sections, most of them more than ten pages, bring the fantastic total up to 232!

Embarking on the seventh section, my arm is grateful for its smaller format in spite of its forty pages. Book-reviews by the dozen, yet all so charitable, so benevolent. They are hearty readers here, and the reviewer's job appears to be that of guide and friend to the publisher rather than the reader. These forty pages seem to have little critical content. They announce innumerable books on authors, and books written about books on authors, and so on and on. Potting the classics appears to be a great New York publishers' pastime.

Breakfast still uneaten, remembered and forgotten again. Standing an hour would hardly have improved it, anyway. Desperately the pillows are rearranged, though my arm is beyond such simple aids as a change of position. Only a major operation, even amputation, could help it now.

A Magazine Section: "Nation's No. 1 Contact Man" proves to be the postman; "Who will it be in 1940?"—a glance through the article left me no wiser. News here of Industry, of the mighty world of America's Workers.

The bed is lost in the avalanche of paper, but determination carries me through to the ninth section—this one in rotogravure. Reward at last, like the currant in the bun, the prize in the brantub. These pages feel wet and cool to the touch, and in them history passes in review: Huey Long is shot; the great Hindenburg has burst into flames; Roosevelt is inaugurated for a second term; the Shenandoah Valley

has a prize apple-harvest; the Potomac is lovely with cherry blossom again in Washington.

More advertisements, calculated to terrify readers into purchases, just in case. . . .

Dance, radio, art, screen, music. Half a page about Hollywood's latest star discovery. All the glitter of New York entertainment. Another half-hour gone by.

Enthusiasm, revived by rotogravure, stimulated by gaiety, flags at last in a welter of hobbies, stamps, resort and travel advertisements, cruise suggestions. Even the fact that I am "cordially invited to spend a glorious winter in Switzerland" cannot arouse me now. The crick in my neck subsides to the pelvis. Wall Street, the General News and the footballers, together with the mass of discarded sections, fall to the floor.

Two sections shout the delights of every housing estate within twenty-five miles of Manhattan. "Builder must sacrifice English home containing 9 rooms, 4 baths, on large plot near Chestnut." Sympathy is called for, but further investigation of the page reveals an astonishing welter of sacrifice, a sort of masochistic epidemic among houseowners. There are sacrifices at Great Neck, a genuine sacrifice at 65,000 dollars, and so the list grows. By telephoning Gibraltar 7-6595 you can learn all you want to know about "a beautiful home for people fond of outdoor life." Then less ambiguous advertisements; for everything any house could ever need and innumerable things no house could possibly need. And columns of "Help Wanted"! Only too true—the bed, the breakfast tray, myself, utterly submerged by the *Sunday Times*. More exhausted than if I had played a round of golf, read Thomas Wolfe's last novel, or fallen under a steam-roller, I contemplate helplessly the vast paper tent that envelops me. The room is newspaper, the newspaper is the room.

I turn to sleep again, but the idea is futile for it is already lunch time. It always is time for lunch when the *Sunday Times* has been read.

In spite of the feast, there was a sense of something missing. The "funnies." Characteristic of America's Sunday press—strip after strip, some comic, some violent—but in the *Sunday Times*, none at all. These funnies, coloured like Japanese prints, or in the English tradition of the Hoxton prints (penny plain, tuppence coloured) show Popeye the Sailorman and Olive Oyl, his sweetheart, Mutt and Jeff, "Bringing up Father," and the Katzenjammer Kids, who are always getting into trouble and who have, doubtless, a lasting psychological effect on

every child. Their fights, producing a constellation of stars and subsequent black eyes, are the glorification of sadism.

* * * * *

America is primarily a country of advertisements. Advertisement can achieve anything from free motor-cars to free trips by plane to Hollywood. Advertisements fill the radio-programmes with their clamorous exhortations. Licence-plates of New York State cars advertise The World's Fair. Dial TIME in Newark, and a free rendition extolling the benefits of a soft drink on retiring or rising accompanies "the correct time." Even doctors and psychiatrists have been called to the committee-board to vote on the choice of a model for the cigarette advertisement. Book-matches bearing the names of shops, hotels and restaurants accumulate on the dressing-room table, so that the activities of the past week can be traced to create a sort of match diary. These matches, carried around from one place to another, are the commercial seeds unwittingly planted by the person to whom they were given, as birds carry seeds in their feet picked up from where they last alighted.

American advertisements have always been startlingly frank. We have grown accustomed to the warnings against Body Odor and Halitosis (Till Breath do us Part). But judging from the space allotted in the magazines, there must now be a boom in "Modern Masculinised Underwear" or "Supported Underpants which fit smoothly without binding." To-day the crotch is given enormous publicity, and we see hundreds of photographs illustrating the benefits of zip-fasteners over fly-buttons ("Why be a Squirmer?"—"Now at last we've ended button bother on shorts").

Even the sky is used as a medium for advertisement. "Socony" is written perpendicularly, and the blimp airship promotes rubber tyres. These are some of the advertisements on which the eye alights:

"Aphrodisia perfume. Aphrodisia makes women alluring. IT'S AMAZING HOW MEN RESPOND."

"Goodman's Passover Matzas recommended by all leading Rabbis."

"Ask the President of your Bank, or any Intelligent Person, about Yim Ya Pills for Indigestion."

"I could go for him—if he had a Bronso face."

"The fourth in a line of Navy men can't take chances with his teeth and gums."

NEWS-STAND.

FILM-FANS.

BOOK-MATCHES.

On the air: his heart-beats are recorded for an Edgar Allan Poe story

"How Beautiful is your Chewing Machine?"

"New—Tulip-pattern Swankyswigs for Kraft Cheese Spreads."

"This cereal: it's bite size!"

"HAVE YOU DONE YOUR BEST BY YOUR DEAR DEPARTED? TRY OUR SPECIALITY DEATH SMILES.

And here is an advertisement for a newspaper:

"You don't have to belong to the 'white tie and tails' gang to get a whale of a lot of fact and feature out of *World-Telegram*. But, of the 400,000 families which have made this newspaper their evening choice, it's curious how many ARE cut to the '400' pattern . . . *doing* New Yorkers, who, like yourself, know the difference between a chukker and an innings, between frijoles and truffles; folk who don't gasp when they see fifty bucks on one bill. Read the *World-Telegram* for a week and see if *you* can avoid building it into your daily life!"

* * * * *

It is difficult to find any reliable guide to the psychology of a nation. Radio in America provides as detailed and accurate a one as we can ever hope to have, for three homes in four—a total of 23,000,000—are equipped with radio sets. Radio audiences outnumber cinema audiences seven times over.

Such a multitude of listeners, almost the entire population, invites investigation, and in the United States the most elaborate and detailed enquiries are constantly being made. In this way broadcasting literally has a chance to provide "what the public wants." Advertisers have not been slow to exploit so gigantic a medium, and last year they bought almost 60,000,000 dollars worth of broadcasting time. Their competition for popularity has brought entertainment programmes to an exceedingly high level.

England has no radio advertising, no competition. The B.B.C. may treat us to half an hour of bagpipe music, compositions of the "Veronique" period, even "reaching a new low" with programmes of incidental music to films. Even the best films suffer when accompanied by fortuitous musical phrases, but the cinema seems unable to rise above these. Its music is without composition, formless, restless, exploiting flutes, harps, drums, organs and bells sentimentally and indiscriminately, forcing to saturation-point the musical equivalent of the bathos of cloistered nuns and soldiers marching to the big, bass drum. Even as an "atmospheric" accompaniment to the scenes we watch,

this noise is exasperating. But the B.B.C. apparently thinks it rises to the level of music which is worth repeating when we have no scene to watch. So it gives us a half-hour programme of incidental cinema music, employing an ingratiatingly refined voice to explain the action. But the musical drip, suggestive of Miss Italia Conti's pantomime elves, is too much. The radio is snapped off.

England claims that her lectures are of higher quality, that programmes of serious music compare with any offered in America. Possibly, but competition in the United States produces a contemporary quality, a vitality beside which the B.B.C. becomes feebly remote from life. Perhaps it is the standardised, cultured indifference of the announcer's voice that robs even the news of actuality, as if one were listening to an account of something that had happened twenty-five years ago.

New York's programmes are often impossible—incessant beauty talks, hill-billy glee-singers, bathetic prose recitations against the organ, floridly dramatic orchestras, too much Victor Herbert, too much Lady Esther—but Heifetz plays for the Chesterfield hour, and, on Saturday evenings, Toscanini.

America pays higher salaries for broadcasting than for film-acting, and, with public taste veering from straight music toward variety, personality is important above all. Mr. Tibbett can charge his singing with personality, but it is more important still that he speak a few words of dialogue, give a brief interview over the microphone, just to show he is a "good guy." Even Benny Goodman's swing music must have the additional attraction of the "Goodman personality build-up."

"Well Benny, what's this about you being a college professor? Is it true the highbrows like your music?"

Benny laughs. "Well, Stan old fellow, I wouldn't know about that—I don't know any highbrows."

Straight presentation of dance-bands is less popular, and variety takes the form of dialogue in which comic gags yield prime place to comic situations. David Freedman, who wrote gags for many favourite

comedians, kept a cross-index of classified jokes. "Shall we have a joke about a mother-in-law?" Off they go to the file and there they have a hundred or more ready-made gags which, by slight alteration, could be injected with spurious life—but rarely sufficient to allay the instinctive suspicion of listeners.

The programme is often performed before an audience. A "Master of Ceremonies" signals for applause or laughter, or holds up a notice that advises "No applause." This "triumphant reception" applause irritated so many listeners that it is being used less and less in radio programmes. If it ever gave an impression of reality, listeners felt they were missing something, for the applause was so often out of proportion to the number's merit. Usually it sounded mechanically ecstatic. There are performers who are stimulated by recorded applause. Al Jolson, however, if he finds his audience insufficiently responsive to the spoken gag, turns quickly, grimacing, by that means achieving his laugh—again only to leave his unseen audience wondering what for heaven's sake was so funny about that?

To take "the housewife out of herself" while she scrubs, scours, washes, full-blooded dramas with sound effects are enacted during the day. Here the head of the Sound Department comes into his own. His is one of innumerable new trades created by radio in recent years. He is of the utmost importance and commands an enormous salary. Toscanini may conduct a hundred men in his own inimitable way, but it is for the engineers to assure the music's fine and true transmission.

The sound engineer has studied his job scientifically. He has acquired another sense, or a sense of sound so acutely developed that it makes us realise how little we use our ears. Mr. Carlisle, of the Columbia Broadcasting System's sound department, has ears attuned to the most delicate nuances of sound. A recording company may bring him forty records and he can realise that, of them all, only the fire alarm bell is genuine and not produced in a studio. In a cinema he need not close his eyes to decide whether a film's sound would pass muster on the air (and generally it would not), for he knows of the perspective of sound. He knows, for example, the sounds of an airplane revving up, taxying over the tarmac, taking off, precisely as they will strike the ear from the different vantage points of the cockpit and of the tarmac, both from behind and in front of the machine.

Among his collection of records he has some that hold more appeal for him than the music of the greatest composers. His particular favourite is of a railway locomotive so vividly recorded that it is possible

to visualise it speeding round a bend, past trees, past houses, the distant whistle coming nearer until it reaches the crossing with a giant "whew!" and hurtles off into the future.

Mr. Carlisle is an artist in sound, and no good artist is careless. Before he achieved accurately the dead whistle of a syren in fog fifty records were made. To record surf entailed more than a visit to the seashore with a recording machine. For five nights technicians went to the shore, and five times the surf did not sound like surf. Each night something was missing, the wind was in the wrong quarter, the waves were too high, or there was something else to detract from the truth of the sound recorded. On the sixth night various positions were tried before the expert was satisfied. The microphone was placed at the waves' edge, on a floating raft, at the end of a jetty, but only when floated on a tin reflector was the surf sound captured in every detail—the long, peaceful roll, the splash, the gurgling backwash of the last and smallest wave.

Some occasions demand that a radio actor do without the services of the sound department, for sound has personality. If the script calls for a character to approach a door, knock, and enter a room, this is no job for the sound man. The actor playing the role must knock on the door *himself* and *his* walk must be heard.

The utmost ingenuity is needed to reproduce the sounds accurately, and the studio laboratories are constantly experimenting. Even New York's great department-stores are now and then fields of experimental activity. There was the time when Macy's basket department was visited by experts in search of a particular creak, but after the assistant had twisted every available basket, it remained undiscovered.

Few listeners realise the importance of sound in radio plays until, perhaps, a rare instance of unconvincing sound makes them aware of the amazing standard of accuracy which they have previously taken for granted. Radio authors are fully conscious of the aid that sound can give their work, remembering always that the audience, like a Greek chorus, is omnipresent. It is beside the railroad track when the smash happens, in the bar-room when the shots are fired, in the air-plane or on the ballroom floor. Some authors, however, expect a little too much, and have been known to request "the sound of falling snow" and "the sound of a horse idling."

The workshops are constantly producing new aids to radio conviction. Mechanisms produce every sort of clock strike or chime, from that in a church steeple to that of the bedside alarm. To create

the sound of rain, anything from a drizzle to a deluge, they have the "rain machine"—a motor blows rape-seed at varying speeds against wooden shelves and down into a ketch.

Our ears select sounds. When we throw up the window in New York, it is only for a brief moment that we hear the composite roar of the traffic below: after that our ears sift the sounds so that we are aware of the separate hoots and screams which contribute to the noisy whole. The sound artist must simulate these sounds so that we are able to identify them with those we hear in our minds. Perspective and space are essential in an effect of sound, and it is the intimate sounds which are the most difficult to recreate.

To watch the "sound actors" at work is a revelation. These are the men who operate the sound-reproducing apparatus. The sound instructions are an integral part of the scenario. A scenario may read: "Fade in—scraping of heavy objects. Fade in—kicking. Walking on wood. Low laugh. Piano—hot." Three days of rehearsals at least are necessary before these plays can be heard on the air by the housewives of the United States. The director sits in a glass cage, shouting his interruptions. Into the Columbia Broadcasting Company's microphone, actors are feigning drunkenness, in city suits playing the parts of "Eagan Rats." The director shouts: "Just a minute. The grunt was swell but you cut in on the thunder cue. . . . Come here. You've got to wait for the footsteps, and that fade-in of street sounds wasn't so good—why, Mr. Beaton, wouldn't you care to put your coat down?" And all the time the "sound actors" are working at high pressure into another microphone. At unseen instructions, they jump wildly on the cloth-lined tray of gravel, or do a jig on a small stage which causes footsteps to reverberate, or bang a motor-car door which is carefully encased in a square of padded wood, or rush to a great steel box in which they rattle pieces of metal. The script calls for a murder, so they fire the revolvers they hold in either hand, and one throws a sandbag to the floor, following it with a double jump.

Like an Olympian bartender, the chief sound-master sits at a huge, L-shaped table, mixing his astonishing sound cocktails. His table is fitted with ever-revolving gramophone discs, amplifiers of all sorts, and an array of inexplicable gadgets. Before him on a stand is his score,

his role heavily outlined in pencil. On his head is a microphone. Silently he runs from one end of the table to tap a water-filled brandy bottle with a champagne glass; rapidly he adjusts the recording of a racing car hurtling along the track, adding the necessary and final gurgle himself, like gargling. He runs to a door framed on a stanchion, kicks it with his heel, rattles the knob, and swings back to the table to let off blank cartridges; he clicks his nails close to the microphone to represent the sound of handcuffs being snapped on. Briefly he pauses: "Like a piece of candy, Mr. Beaton?"—then back to the table to fire another revolver.

The play's hero, speaking into the microphone, has a rich, fruit-cake voice, but he is small and weedy, unsuited to the part for stage, screen or television.

Rehearsal ends. The actors relax: "Gee, I've been spitting all over my script."

"Say, Chick, you were fine."

"Thanks, Sugar."

They place a memorial to one of the characters already "bumped off" in the serial, saying wistfully: "It was a nice salary."

"He sure was a sweetheart of a guy."

* * * * *

Another talent highly developed by radio is that of the running commentator, whose sporting broadcasts have such power to excite that women have been known to faint while listening. Trained to speak as fast as his eye can see, the commentator never falters, never pauses, never fails to fill an unexpected gap in the action with some pungent remark. He plays for time by lengthening unduly the word which happens to be on his lips at the critical moment, taking mental stock of action which is too fast for verbal translation. At the first sign of the slightest slowing-up of action, he makes up leeway by pattering faster than ever. The inhuman chatter grinds on as inexorably as a road drill—and with much the same effect.

"Boys-THIS-is-a-battle-all-right! Here's-Baer-coming-in—coming-in-close—very-close." Then away again like a machine-gun: "Here's a long right to the chin but Baer *TOOK* it. He's grinning. He's hooked a left to the jaw of—*Oh BOY* what a round! There goes the gong!" Another voice intervenes to tell us of the advantages of shopping at the hat firm which sponsors the night's broadcast. Again the

road drill: "Now then, we're at the start of the third stanza and already Hogan's giving everything he's got and there's PER-LENTY of muscle between his blows. Baer moves in again—now they go into a clinch—he lands a left jab on Bobby's nose he lets go RIGHT into his mouth *AND* misses! He's hooked to the ribs and pumped under the heart—no doubt he's done lots of damage to THAT young man." Then faster, faster: "Here's-a-right-to-the-face-another-right-to-the-face and Hogan's trying to fight back—HARD. They're both plenty red round the stomach and cheekbones showing they've taken punish-ment alright—left-right-on-the-chin—he's stunned—that's what's called a rabbit blow to the face of the Californian—he's back at Baer's right ear-another-left-he's-at-the-ropes! He's alright and quicker than speed itself he steps away—he takes a left on the jaw giving AMPLE fuel for another hook to the left to the jaw of—he's on his hand, he's rolling over to a sitting position—three-four—Hogan—right again—he goes down—the fight's over—Hogan's eyes are badly lacerated. . . ."

"Ten or eleven thousand people cheer as the curtain drops on a peach of a fight, and to all you listeners we offer an invitation to any of the hundred hat stores if you want hat understanding and complete satisfaction." We imagine the commentator being carried out on a stretcher. A voice asks "Do you want a cheese to make your tongue tingle with satisfaction?"

The evening programme goes its way in infinite variety. From one station, intimate information about Hollywood stars is dispensed—"Lend me your ears while I dish you the highlights of Hollywood's latest gossip. Is Shirley Temple growing?" the announcer asks. He traces the metamorphosis of sedate Irene Dunne into rowdy Carole Lombard roles. "On the first day's shooting on her new picture, the whole studio waited anxiously for her entrance. What did Miss Dunne do? She turned a couple of handsprings. That, folks, was a superb piece of psychology on the part of Miss Dunne, one of the clearest and quickest bits of thinking Hollywood has ever known."

But there is plenty to choose from; a lecture on "The Critical Need of Interior Stability" by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick; the Church of the Air; the magnificent choir of Tuskegee's Negro Institute; Amos and Andy; or Eddie Duchin's "sweet" band.

* * * * *

In New York flowers have become the graceful and artificial token of a social system. Flowers are sent by Americans on the slightest provocation. A dinner or an illness is excuse for three dozen roses. Flowers are sent on birthdays, on holidays, on Valentine's Day, on Mother's Day. Young men automatically send a bunch of gardenias to the girl they are taking out that night—New Yorkers "Say it with Flowers," flowers are sent by telegraph. Miss Gertrude Stein is only partially right in saying a rose "is a rose." Ladies buy flowers for their own houses from a shop where they know the flowers are fresh and cheap, but if they are sending a present, it must go in a box with an address which is considered smart.

Here, the flowers themselves have forgotten nature, and enter heartily into the artifices of a sophisticated society. In London we have the barrows from Covent Garden as harbingers of spring, with their leafless lilac from Holland; the first salad, fresh tulips and, expressing June, the marguerites and geraniums in earthenware pots. In Paris they have the out-of-door flower markets, the rows of stalls under the shadow of the Madeleine. In Rome they have the old women under their striped awnings on the steps of the Piazza del Populo. But in New York the windows of the flower shops throughout the year are stacked with a prodigious richness of flora, irrespective of clime or country. The elements of surprise and delight combine to make an experience of a visit to the Goldfarb Flower Market. In the ice-rooms, gardenias and camellias are arranged in rows and lie in drawers, like artificial blooms in a draper's store. Rooms are stacked with bundles of flowers not yet in bloom. Other ice-rooms are reserved entirely for roses. Upstairs, the flowers radiate light and perfume, and orchids are parasites in the strange plant-life of a tropical jungle of blossom and bloom. Trees with enormous leaves are obscurely named; plants and ferns are made to grow out of peculiar-shaped bark; mimosa trees, with more delicate filigree than those that grow in the South, are forced to a height of ten feet. A whole orchard of apple-blossom has been potted and, on Lincoln's birthday, the assistant says: "You want something send a lady? Can offer you tulips, lilies of the valley, sweet peas, daisies; there's some nice peach and pear blossom; lilies—amaryllis, calla and madonna—dogwood, snapdragon, forsythia, gladioli, anemones, daffodils. Hyacinth are nice just now, or cinerarias, carnations, delphiniums, pussy-willow, acacia, violets, ranunculus, tuberoses, genista, ivy, pansies, stocks and phlox."

" the graceful and artificial token of a social system"

Occasionally the New Yorker motors, past the waste tracks and dump-yards of scrap-iron, and disused cars, to the country. He has been reading Daniel Denton's charming, old-world account of the flowers of Manhattan. "The Herbs which the Countrey naturally afford, are Purſlain, white Orage, Egrimony, Violets Penniroyal, Aslicampane, beſides Saxparilla very common, with many more, Yea, in May you ſhall ſee the Woods and Fields ſo curiouſly bedecke with Roſes and an innumerable multitude of delightful Flowers."

What does he see? He sees what a mess Nature makes of it when she tries to copy art. A few puny flowers struggle up among the mould of country gardens; some frost-bitten, some bug-bitten; their owners proudly, but vainly, trying to protect them through weather and blight. He returns to the city with a superior smile, murmuring: "*Nous avons changé tout cela!*"

IV

CIVIC SCENIC

GLANCING at the front page of a New York newspaper, one is surprised at the number of headlines referring to the activities of some city official. Civic affairs are, in fact, very important news, and the doings of officials, from the Mayor down, seem to have an extraordinary interest for the man-in-the-street.

New York, then, is a city in which local politics play a large part in the public mind. Tammany Hall, named after an Indian chieftain, was adopted by the New York City local Democratic Party as its headquarters. Fernando Wood, the first demagogue leader, is believed to have entered the city originally in the hind legs of an "elephant" in a circus procession. From this inferior position he rose to be mayor. That was in 1850. Tammany Hall was, until recently, the most powerful body in city local politics. As a political organisation, it has had its ups and downs. For a time it seems all-powerful, then corruption and graft bring it crashing down to begin another cycle of reform, corruption and graft. Notorious in the latter part of the last century and in the early part of this for corrupt administration, Tammany has had many spectacular "bosses" and public figures associated with its name. From William Marcy Tweed, "boss" of the crooked Tammany ring of the 'seventies, to Mayor Jimmy Walker, who resigned office rather than face an enquiry, its record has been an unsavoury one.

The political machine of Tammany, during the last century, was a model of caucus politics. Local "bosses," often ignorant and crooked men, kept it working, and the most uneducated sentiments were appealed to in order to keep the electors loyal. Free beer parties were given on the river, and the Irish vote was especially canvassed. Enormous public funds were stolen. The council was known as the Forty Thieves. Tweed died in gaol. The Tammany Governor of New York was impeached in 1913.

No longer a synonym for corruption, Tammany is still a major

political force. But its power has declined, and the administration is now in the hands of the Fusionist Mayor, La Guardia.

In New York, the concept of Justice is less impersonal and dispassionate than in English courts, where its arbiters, sitting in wigs and taking their time, calculate the value of every statement and fact before allowing them to influence their decision. In American justice, as in French, the human element is all-important. An American court might be likened to the soap-box meetings in Hyde Park, which are a different, but vital, element in the life of a community. English law is sacred and dehumanised, and the mildest protest or opinion expressed in court or outside it may be considered as "Contempt" and bring grave consequences. In America the prisoner may answer back, and the fact that he is made to withdraw the remark that the prosecution has a face like a horse nevertheless amuses the jury, and is psychologically prejudicial in his favour. An English judge makes dry, academic jokes that might be found in a waiting-room *Punch*. The New York Judge is alive. The chorus girls' legs are exhibited for him to estimate their commercial sex-appeal. Coats are taken off, people spring to their feet, snapping braces. Only in the much-discussed third-degree method of interrogation may it be said that the human element does not enter. Rather, the inhuman.

New Yorkers are aware of crime in a direct way which is outside the experience of most Londoners. An astonishing number of New Yorkers have, at some time or another, actually witnessed a crime, and statistics indicate that one in every three people in the United States is, either directly or indirectly, affected by the activities of

gangsters. Between six and seven thousand major crimes are committed every year in this city.

Crime is more prevalent in New York, and is also more evident. Robberies with violence, hold-ups, crimes requiring the use of machine-guns and fast cars, display it to New Yorkers in a way denied Londoners. Many Americans refer casually to some gun battle they have witnessed which, had it occurred in Mayfair instead of Gotham, would have been a subject of national discussion for a week. New York has its Sydney Street Sieges, many of them, but they are soon forgotten.

As many as fifteen thousand ambulance calls are received at a room at Police Headquarters in one day. They include calls to release tree'd cats and persons from stalled elevators, revolving doors and turnstiles. A vast number of radio-equipped police cars, with rifles, machine-guns and tear gas, are directed from the police centre. Even children are often acutely conscious of crime. An isolated petrol station, receiving a telephone call from a stranded car, sent a fourteen-year-old boy on a bicycle, equipped of course with a revolver for protection. The boy's gangster-fed mind fired him with suspicion, and he shot three men. It so happened that they were criminals. The patrolman earns as much as sixty dollars, or twelve pounds, a week as recompense for his war with law-breakers, and his motto, like that of the garage youth, is "Take no chances."

The police were called one evening by an old woman living on Park Avenue who had seen someone on her fire escape. The "intruder" happened to be an irresponsible schoolboy on a tour of exploration. Before he could regain his own apartment, police sirens wailed into the street below. Too terrified to move, the boy watched cars surround the apartment-house. Searchlights blinded him as twenty-odd policemen, armed with machine guns and automatics, tear-gas and rifles, commanded him to surrender. The wretched boy was reprimanded, and the siege was over.

The public's code regarding crime is, "Don't at any cost get mixed up in it." This leads to behaviour many an Englishman would consider discreditable, such as hurrying away should one happen on a hold-up or a gang fight. No matter how acute his civic sense may be in other ways, the New Yorker feels he cannot afford to get

involved in crime, incurring, as a material witness often does, the risk of reprisals. The police lack co-operation from the public and must do the whole job themselves.

Although the visitor to New York need not expect to encounter crime, it is quite possible that he might do so. The taxicab, for example, is not always the symbol of pampered safety that it is in London. For an escort in London to bid good-night to a girl with the phrase "I'll see you into a cab" has become almost a convention. Danger may even now sometimes lurk in a New York cab, where crooked drivers have been known to attack and rob their fares in the early hours of the morning. To neglect to see a girl home in New York thus becomes something more than discourteous.

A variety of reasons has been advanced for the prevalence of crimes with violence in New York—even the extremes of weather have been blamed, along with the cinema, lack of religion, and lust for wealth. New York has always been, to a certain extent, a dis-organised community. A great influx of immigrants, expecting to see streets paved with gold, only found much poverty and little pro-tection in the general fight for wealth. The desire for, and the advan-tages of, riches were so great that these immigrants, with no feeling of responsibility to this new country and no fear of the legislation of their distant homelands, joined in the increasing corruption. Everyone wanted money, and volunteers who would be satisfied with the rather inadequate pay of the police force were hard to find. Thus, with a police force open to bribery, with many judges who had their own fish to fry, dishonesty was no ground for a feeling of inferiority.

Children, cared for neither by the State nor their parents, can hardly be expected to develop a sense of patriotism or of responsibility to society. They lead a "dead-end," gang-like existence with other children, so far removed from contact with their parents that, while they speak American, their parents cling to their native language.

So much violence seems oddly paradoxical in America, which does so much in many ways to prevent pain and suffering. Her dentists are the kindest, her maternity homes the most humane, in the world. There are a million cures for headaches and indigestion. Material comforts abound in hotels, railways, homes. Every effort is made to combat pain, in a country where so many criminals inflict it daily. Yet Americans loathe crime as heartily as anyone. If conditions exist which produce it in brutal intensity, the people can hardly be blamed.

* * * * *

New York's *Daily News* and *Daily Mirror* print photographs of the day's best killing, and candid cameras produce extraordinary documents of crime—negro corpses sprawling among the stains on the floor of a low dive, victims of gang war lying riddled on the sidewalk; yet no contemporary painter seems to have thought fit to use as subjects the human dramas enacted every day at Police Headquarters. No American Hogarth or Daumier has appeared to do justice to the "Line-up", when, in the early morning, those arrested during the previous day and night are brought upon a brilliantly lit stage, where they face a volley of the very questions they do not want to answer.

The melancholy procession passes in front of an audience of gold-badged detectives, who watch with varying degrees of amusement; the grim reality of this theatre prevents these contrasting types from degenerating into caricature. Each man must be seen with hat on, hat off, and it is revealing to discover just how much the hat itself is endowed with character in the methods of wearing it. It is tugged down on to one eye—tough guy; flipped to the back of the head —nonchalant; placed carefully on the top of the head, straight—pathetic, rather ridiculous.

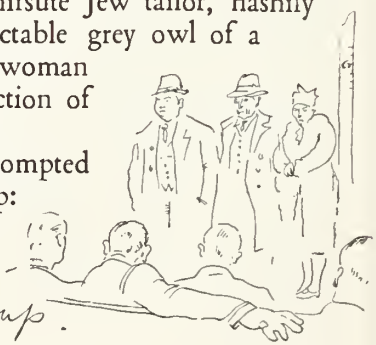
Even the toughest of these specimens with battered yellow faces behaves in a babyish way. They tug their overcoats, twist their fingers, shrug shoulders, hang heads, drop eyelids—*très bébé*—and shy at the microphone. Others, with longer stage experience, peer through the lights with straining eyes, taking this opportunity to spot detectives to be avoided in future. An official whose duty it is to pull them to attention ejaculates: "Put yer face to ther mike. Take yer hands outa yer pockets. Put'n yer hat."

A quartette takes the stage: a pale young man, like a Velasquez portrait of King Philip of Spain; a hirsute Jew tailor, flashily dressed, with hourglass waist; a respectable grey owl of a business man; and an oyster-eyed old woman in an astrakhan coat. A perfect collection of contrasts.

From a high desk the interrogator, prompted by a detective, challenges King Philip: "Ever been here before?"

"No, Captain."

"Well, how do you know I'm the Captain?"



King Philip is silent.

"Ever seen these people before?"

"Nope." But evidence is produced to show that this same quartette has had three previous convictions, and has served five years in Sing Sing.

"Pass along. Next there. And you, where were you when you got pinched? Hustlin' were you? Any luck? Just that old gag about earning a living, eh?"

A youth in a red and blue sweater stands beside his friend, a wizened dwarf, denying everything. A blonde, the Lilian Gish type, flicks imaginary dust from her dress as she is accused of defrauding Saks. She smiles superciliously and rolls her tongue, while it becomes evident that she has already seventeen counts against her for pick-pocketing, forgery and falsely obtaining money. A pathological case, and rather frightening.

Downstairs, like animals for market, the prisoners sit in their locked coops—coops that contain a lavatory seat. The photographers' lights burn all day for the endless "complimentary sittings." Head and shoulders, full face and in profile, with and without hat, that is the undeviating routine. Only the most serious cases warrant a full-length portrait. The proofs, filed in the Rogues' Gallery, are classified according to crime. These relentless camera-studies reveal female traffickers in drugs with untidy hair, men masquerading as clergymen snapped in and out of disguise, female impersonators favouring matinée hats and clothes that were fashionable in 1918.

The inspector produces his favourite index card.

"This is a nigger dressed as a woman, a pervert of the lowest type. And this just shows you, they think up the darndest things—this is some dope in a tin hidden inside an Italian cheese. This dope we found under the soles of these carpet slippers. This book is one of a set we found in a library—the inside was scooped out and filled with "snow." A woman sent someone these two tubes of toothpaste—but this one isn't toothpaste."

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Inspired by the Palace of the Popes at Avignon, the New York Hospital is probably the finest example of modern architecture in the world. Of white brick, covering three square blocks, from near or far it is awesome and beautiful in its simplicity, towering in dazzling splendour over the East River.

Windows alone decorate the exterior. They give it the grandeur of a cathedral. Go through every corridor, every ward, and that impression remains. One leaves as one entered, with no feeling of depression, no dread of disease, no horrible and grisly images in the mind to provide future torment. It is like some giant modern monastery where hundreds of people devote their lives tirelessly to tending the sick, in an unbroken atmosphere of strength and purity.

Its story begins in the late eighteenth century, when the hospital's first patients were soldiers of the revolutionary war; and now perfection seems to have been achieved. It is to-day, and always has been, supported by private contributions.

In the marble entrance hall the effect is one of sunshine and light. So it is throughout—in the doctors' and nurses' dining-rooms, like those of some expensive country club; in the luxury suites for the wealthy, air-conditioned, fitted with cork ceilings and aluminium-framed soundproof windows; in the simple, cheerful rooms for poor patients, with fresh, crisp yellow paint and gay, red linen curtains. Patients here pay only as much as they can afford, and twelve floors are devoted wholly to charity cases.

Pass through the hospital from end to end and you will not see an ugly or a tasteless object. For once, vast sums of money have bought beauty.

This pantry, like those on every other floor, has its drawers of cracked ice. Every patient has an individual refrigerator, and you can live for eight dollars a day, in greater luxury than Park Avenue's most modern apartments could provide.

A doctor, recent addition to the resident medical staff of 105, looks down at the compass in the floor to take his bearings in this six-and-a-half-mile labyrinth of corridors. A sister telephones on one of the hospital's nine hundred lines. You pass glass cases containing surgical instruments, gleaming and immaculate, as if these modern knights in white had found something as worthy of reverence as the Holy Grail.

This attendant with trucks of sterilised water performs as if his rites were religious. Tending his diamond-bright glass retorts, manufacturing gigantic jewels as the sun streams through the windows, prodigally flashing diamonds from retorts to quiver in reflection on the walls, he becomes a magician, a modern Merlin. He is typical of the hospital as he tests rubber gloves, blasting air into them to seek defects, utterly absorbed in his task. Integrity means so much to this

SIDEWALK SLAUGHTER

". . . as well as can be expected"

New York

Hospital

man that he did not rest content until he had himself invented a machine for making imperfections in the gloves immediately detectable. That seems to be the way all these people work, from the surgeons in the eighteen operating theatres to the laundry's 125 workers.

Always there is the supreme decoration of New York's skyline outside the windows. The contract for cleaning these windows is said to be worth 14,000 dollars a month, exclusive of the windows in the Cornell College and the Psychopathic Block, which require special attention. For the normal person, the sudden appearance of the gesticulating cleaner outside the window, nothing but a strap to prevent his plunging into eternity, would be unnerving enough—for psychopathics the shock must be terrific.

Convalescent patients in the solarium listen to the radio without disturbing their less fortunate neighbours, for a contrivance under the pillow ensures that the radio can be heard only by the occupant of that bed—yet another expression of the creed of service and consideration that operates throughout.

In the basement is a new world of perfect cleanliness. Here in the kitchens are pastrycooks who turn out gargantuan cherry tarts and apple flans comparable with the finest French or Swiss pastries. Here are mountains of rose radishes, topped and tailed, in a silvered room where salads are prepared to regain any appetite. A man chops carrots with the speed and efficiency of a machine. Stacks of celery are being scraped. Sack after sack of potatoes disappears into the mouth of the grind, emerging at last to be inspected and to have eyes cut out by hand. Primrose-coloured cabbages are fed into a shredding machine to become cole slaw. A machine peels and cores apples by the thousand. And so the work goes on, ceaselessly, efficiently, in preparation for the six thousand meals the hospital must serve every day. From operating theatre to kitchen the atmosphere is the same—men and women living for an ideal of service, with the finest equipment that money and science can provide to help them.

Somehow things seem different at Bellevue, the City Hospital. Day after day, the finest physicians and surgeons in America treat huge numbers of patients there, doing magnificent work; yet the atmosphere is not the same.

This vast group of buildings, with dark courts, black ironwork and subterranean tunnels, stands on the East River at 26th Street. The blackened paint, once green, and the orange daubs of undercoating, combine to resemble the frightening early pictures of Chirico. There

seems to be no attempt whatever to camouflage the grimness of death, accident and disease. It is to the Bellevue that street smash victims or helpless drunkards are taken. The ambulance bells, as the cars rush up the ramp to the emergency wards, seem to clang constantly.

A very bright probationer nurse is deputed to guide us through the hospital. Her bell-shaped muslin cap is poised precariously on the back of her head of streaming blond hair.

"Let's go in here to the superintendent." We follow, and she asks, "What have you got to-day?"

"Only a cardiac," he replies, and we see the old man with grey hair who lies entwined in rubber tubes which lead to bubbling retorts and oxygen valves. We pass on.

The "anaemias" and "surgical conditions," in varying states of consciousness, lie in rows.

Some minute babies lie, face down, in their cots. They turn, and their perfection is shattered, for each one is afflicted with a dreadful hare-lip.

"They're waiting for operations. They'll be all right," we are gaily reassured by our blonde guide.

One little black child, curled like a cat at the foot of its cot, wears a white turban of bandages, shielding an infection of the scalp.

In vast cauldrons that make Ali Baba's jars seem thimble-small, the midday meal is being prepared for thousands.

In winter the hospital operates even beyond its capacity. Then the twenty-three hundred or more beds overflow into the corridors. Wards are filled with patients of every colour; they idle about the corridors, sitting anywhere, in colourless grey robes that become dingier the more often they are washed. Those who have undergone scalp operations have lost all personality with the shaving of their heads. Not ill enough to occupy beds all day, not well enough to leave, they roam about, waiting only for the passage of time.

"This is the kids' nursery, but it's rest hour now."

The dolls are abandoned. In the curtained darkness, in a wide-eyed trance, the children lie in their glass cubicles.

"Let's go to the psychopathic wards. They're beautiful." Our guide inspires us with her enthusiasm. Her hair flies in the crisp breeze, her cape waves as she dances along. "I love showing people round," she confides, "it's nice to get away from hard work now and then."

As we go we pass, moored at the water's edge, the Bellevue Day

Camp boat for the transport of arrested tuberculosis cases. There they live a sort of "Outward Bound" existence from which few escape.

"See those broken windows? That's where the rowdy boys live. We'll go to see them, but I doubt if Miss Mantis will let us see the 'violents.' Pity—they're cute. We have *more* Napoleons and Shirley Temples in this place . . ." The psychopathic building fascinates our guide.

Most recent and luxurious addition to the Bellevue, the block is almost comparable with the New York Hospital—shining floors, murals, polished cleanliness. Here is one vast, concrete *mille feuille* of abnormality—those who have been unable to bring themselves to go out of doors for years, those who have washed their hands so often that the skin has come off, men and women whose minds have suffered so that they can no longer order their own lives. Through locked doors comes the banging of wood and shouts. "They have broken the bell," but eventually the door is opened, and the boys prove to be little rowdier than those in a school playground. A piccaninny tap dances ceaselessly. A small boy whispers, winking, "Get me outa here, can't yer?"

Most of these delinquent boys are victims of bad home environment. They have their puppet theatre, and a stenographer takes down their remarks during the performance to provide a basis for the analysis of their complexes and reactions. To-day the alcoholics and melancholics are too listless to show interest in anybody as they stand motionless, in colourless, beltless robes.

"No belts? My goodness, if they want to die, they can think of *more* things . . ." and our guide relates some strange methods of suicide.

An old man will not sit down to lunch because he believes that Moses is calling to him. Another thumps out "When Irish Eyes are Smiling" at the piano. A radio is playing "Mad about the Boy" at the end of the corridor.

"Look through that window—that's where we keep the camisoles."

"Do you mean straightjackets?"

"If you like to call them that"; and, opening a door, "Here's their theatre. Heck, how the audience yells. No foolin', you oughta hear what they say if they don't like the show. Here's the classroom—good heavens, where *are* the schizophrenic panels? They were swell. Miss Mantis again, I guess. Just like her to take them down."

We see, however, drawings and paintings by schizophrenic children, made for purposes of diagnosis. They remind one of the work

of Miro, and are infinitely beautiful in the boldness and simplicity of their design. Strange colour combinations, poetic fantasy and integrity are a legacy from the Primitives. It is astonishing to find that compositions which would make demands on the energy and vitality of a trained and mature master are blithely tackled by mentally unsound children.

Outside again, the student nurse points to the mortuary. "When someone is dying here, we say they're flying. My, I'll never forget my first corpse! I thought he looked like something was happening, so I called one of the nurses and said I thought he was flying, but she just said, 'Take another look—he's flown.'" She turns on her heel and points: "Over there's the Fidelio brewery. On a hot day you can smell the hops and it's very pleasant. Well, good-bye, and not at all—you're welcome, I'm sure."

Along the street, the passers-by look strange. That man leaning against "Simone Simon Sings" should surely be in the semi-disturbed ward, and the look of the woman waiting for the traffic light to change seems darkly significant.

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Mindful of the fate of elderly couples, accustomed to refinement, who suffer poverty in old age, a wealthy Jew named Andrew Freedman endowed a home in New York. His hope was that here these old people, ill-equipped to fight poverty alone, could end their days in self-respect, without the humiliating atmosphere of an institution; and it is only now and then that the dream is shattered. Sometimes the old people are trying, and the younger members of the staff become impatient; even the Nonconformist parson, acting in the capacity of host, headmaster and hotel manager combined, occasionally suffers from frayed nerves.

Admitted to the home only in couples, usually well over sixty on arrival, these old people take on a new lease of life and seem to reach incredible ages. Relieved of anxiety, they bloom again in a sort of Indian summer.

In the living-rooms, furnished like an hotel with Persian carpets and palm trees in brass pots, they play bezique, and in their bedrooms, complete with triple mirrors, they dress for dinner. In the kitchen, notes are made of their personal tastes: "Stokes: breakfast ten minutes to eight Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays"; "Natica: cereal Friday

night"; "Lew: milk toast in place of cheese dish," and so on. But even so, mistakes are made, and Mrs. Cram knows that, although she asked that the butter should be put on the bread before it was toasted, it has arrived as it has to-day just because of spite.

Monday always seems to be a Black one, and again Mr. Snow and Colonel Roberts have got into one of their arguments as to whether Princeton or Yale is superior in the social scale, have broken up the bridge four and are no longer on speaking terms; and it was disgraceful that the old German doctor should not be allowed to cook the *Hasen Pfeffer* in his room, after he had spent five dollars on it. The brusque housemaid had been quite hard-hearted, saying, "He knew the rules, didn't he?"

The Nonconformist parson introduces Mrs. Tomplinson, who is happy again with a few pieces of her own furniture in a room that looks out over beds where irises will bloom in the summer; but not long ago she had carried on terribly, and it had been very tricky trying to get the empty bed out of the room after her husband died. They offered her a canary, but she said the inmates were not allowed pets and she knew it was only a ruse. So they had to explain that rules existed only to be broken, and she accepted the canary.

Upstairs, Mrs. Wendman is lying in the infirmary, next to the little room that the Nonconformist parson calls "our morgue," but Mrs. Wendman explains that it won't be long before she is downstairs again; "there is nothing wrong, just run down, but you must expect that at seventy-eight."

* * * * *

In over-heated apartments on Central Park West, lonely old ladies assemble for their unhealthy evenings of morbid entertainment. The compère turns down the orange-shaded lights, and in the darkness the séance starts. Behind the plush curtain a medium, tied in an armchair, has been hypnotised into sleep, and soon the compère evokes from him a few unintelligible parrot-noises that, with encouragement, gain in volume and coherence until the low-ceilinged furnace is rent by his blood-curdling shrieks. The compère directs the cross-questioning, and from behind the curtains these idiotic squeaks profess to bring back secrets from beyond the grave. The old ladies' enquiries as to their husbands and sons are answered in whimsical and inadequate colloquialisms. A white cloth, tied to the end of a stick and waved through the curtains, professes to be the ghost of Sir Arthur Conan

Doyle, and some ectoplasm is manufactured from a mixture containing white of egg, gelatine and soap. Flowers from the next world are strewn around the room, but it is more than an economical coincidence that they are those cheap, off-white, semi-everlasting flowers from Australia that are flooding the market at the moment. Quaking with emotion, with feelings that have run so high that incredulity would be considered a personal insult, it is a gruesome experience to watch these gullible old ladies. Yet it is impossible to leave, for the medium is performing his act by the front door of the apartment, and no one is allowed to pass through the curtains before the compère has run through his pantomime of awakening him from his trance, tidying up his effects, and going through the real business of the evening—the collection of a dollar from each dupe.

* * * * *

Deep in New York's downtown financial district, with its odd collection of ill-mated architectural styles—Corinthian columns cheek by jowl with neo-Baroque doorways, Gothic towers loftily disdaining mid-Victorian embellishments—lies an innocuous building that houses the Stock Exchange. The twin green domes of this place, where a nation's fortunes may be jeopardised, are ironically reminiscent of Monte Carlo's Casino, where fortunes are won and lost for pleasure.

Towering above it are the wonders of the modern world—the Woolworth Building, once the greatest of them all, now a mere shoot among the vast masonry stalks. At midday you walk through streets thick with pedestrians, each one unaccountably hurrying as if life depended on just those few minutes in a crowded street. In the Stock Exchange one is warned to expect little excitement—it is a "quiet" day.

The warning makes the deafening roar from the hall far more terrifying, more amazing, than it could otherwise have been. Utter madness! Whistling, shouting, clapping, laughter, echoing and re-echoing through the vast hall! The clamour reverberates as does laughter in an indoor swimming bath, but this carnival is for men only, and the band has stopped.

Looking down, they are bewilderingly like ants, their every movement accelerated as in old-time movies, when even a funeral was a breathless business. These human ants swarm wildly, weaving in and out, chewing gum, snatching at newspapers, hurling them down, scribbling fanatically on pocket-pads, never attempting to do less than


STOCK EXCHANGE

three things at a time. Paper lies thick on the floor like giant confetti, and we see a sudden white fountain as a cloud of it shoots into the air, settling down again gently like snow.

Each man, with the experience of years, has gained the meticulous certainty of a machine as he flips out his notebook, jots down a quotation, and folds it back into his breast-pocket in one nonchalant gesture. Everyone takes bundles of papers from their pockets, selecting the sheet they seek with incredible speed, as if every fingertip possessed an infallible eye. They are like conjurors who have mastered their art, so completely acquiring another sense that hesitation, for them, seems rather absurd.

Placed at intervals, the horseshoe counters are irresistible magnets for the ants, respectable-looking ants with grey hair and spectacles who cluster there, feverishly chewing gum. An enlargement of the ticker-tape glares from each of the hall's four corners, thrown from magic lanterns. The figures swim by: X60, SBC1, 00-2, SMS7/8, RCA597, and the eye falters trying to follow, the mind having long ceased its effort to find meaning in the crazy succession. That tape in reality means happiness and despair, new homes, cars, furs, jewels, everything that money can buy. It means tragedy, too, and the disaster that sudden financial ruin wreaks in wealthy homes. To the ants it means all these things and more, but they act mechanically as without immediate consciousness of the fact. These are poker-faced ants. It seems impossible to link the tape with reality.

Yet the telephonists hear everything. Gigantic deals are made just verbally between members. Here again, by practice, a sixth sense is at work. Ears are trained to listen to three or four conversations simultaneously, and the presence of others nearby is no distraction. The brokers, too, have abnormally acute ears.

"It's very quiet to-day.—Was that a seven-eights bid?" And the transaction is done in a flash. From the moment the quotation appears, not more than half a minute passes before the appearance of the sales throughout the country. Only the ticker-tape can co-ordinate all transactions and pin them down to permanency.

Grey-uniformed messengers run their limited beats; others carry telephones, plug in, converse at an alarming speed, plug out and are on their way again. Vast gold entrails carry orders and reports from the horseshoes, an intricate tube-system of communication.

Would I like to see the Counting House? It would be refreshing after this crazy symphony of unintelligible sound, this rapid confusion

of men incomprehensibly laughing, shouting, chewing, shouting again. So to the strange underworld of the Counting House. Neat little ants here, with immaculate creases in sober suits, hair unruffled, eyes impersonal but bright as buttons. They sit behind tall desks, in front of them long books in which they write without respite. All day this has gone on, yet they remain unruffled, neat, methodical, efficient. Into their long books go strings of figures, chronicling in mathematics the rise and fall of family fortunes.

These rooms are bare, severe; so lacking adornment of any kind that the telephones, in regular rows, become decorative rather than functional, the only decorative feature in them. "We're geared up to high speed and big business, eh?" winks an ant with a cigar in his mouth.

Each of these rooms has eight or more of these inhumanly neat little men; human adding-machines, tabulating the gains and losses of others' financial bets, in perfect running order always. Do they ever break down? And if so what fate befalls them? Unimaginable that they could break down, but one day, perhaps. . . .

But nervous energy is not so well suppressed back on the Floor. By the end of a quiet day nerves are tense, and some outlet must be found. Practical jokes suffice—and the men who guide the destinies of New World dynasties, of the nation itself, perhaps, cavort like schoolboys. They yell, take pot-shots at hanging hats, one secretly squeezes a tube of tooth-paste on the bald head of an old man; they hug one another, slap one another diabolically hard on the back, jab one another in the ribs, massage carefully the nape of a neck. It is all very strenuous, tiring to watch, yet these financial robots show no signs of fatigue. Like the adding-machine ants in the underworld of the Counting House, they outwardly remain unperturbed. Pockets are filled with water. An innocent reader of an evening paper suddenly finds his journal a mass of flames. A young man, mechanically shrugging his shoulders, fidgets with his hands, and for nothing better to do unhooks a telephone, barks into it, and hangs it up again. That seems to be particularly funny and relieving to pent-up spirits. No news breaks the calm of the quiet day, so in the babel below the gallery a buffoon tickles an old man's ear.

The President of the Exchange mounts a marble balcony and strikes the three o'clock gong. The horseplay is suddenly halted. The men reach for bowler hats, their eyes turn to stone, their mouths become grim as they leave for respectable homes in Long Island, Westchester,

Park Avenue and Riverside Drive. With the striking of the gong, as on Cinderella's midnight, life changes utterly. The feckless boys have become alarmingly transformed into heads of families, dignified, intimidating pillars of New York society.

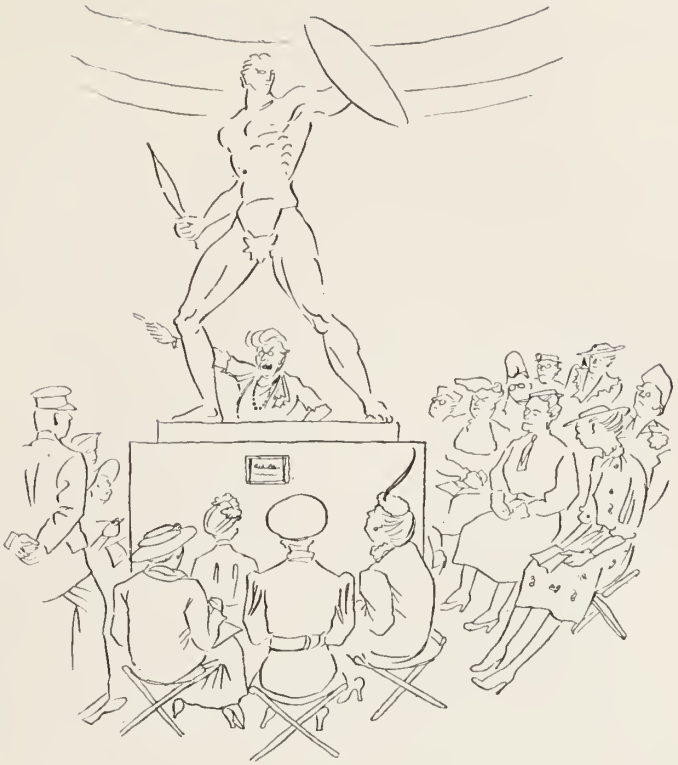
When later you meet these same schoolboys away from the Exchange it is difficult to believe your recollections of tooth-paste and wet pockets, and unthinkable to remind them of such things.

* * * * *

Anyone who enjoys Helen Hokinson's work in *The New Yorker* will have realised how New York clubwomen delight in lectures, but it is difficult to comprehend just how widespread is this yearning for culture. In museums one may see wide-eyed groups sitting in a steam-heated daze, surrounded by mummies. The lecturer meanders on about the wonders of ancient Egypt. Her manner is detached, as if she spoke her thoughts aloud, but thoughts too lazy to produce ideas. Her audience is fascinated.

From Egypt we move to the medieval loggia. There is a rush of camp stools. The lecturer, under the spell of her own voice, preens herself, posing as she indicates a thirteenth-century wooden figure. She dispenses information about thirteenth-century figures, about methods of identification—by footwear or the lack of it—all confidently and without fear of protest. "Look at those sandals. Hence our conclusion this is Saint James the Less. The colours, however, are wrong. The under-garment should be red and the outer garment blue, but then, all colour makes an emotional appeal. Now let us look at his hair. What wonderful organisation of the beard! It is vurry, *vurry* decorative, but now we have just a second left for the windows."

Again a rush of camp stools. This time to the corner in which a jewelled strip has been transplanted from Chartres. The lecturer scratches the back of her head and continues: "Again we see the emotional appeal of colour. Here every single piece of colour is a single piece of glass, and every single piece of glass is a single piece of colour. Now, the effect of all this colour creates a vurry emotional appeal. Now, when you walk into a building and you see a window like this, it doesn't look like a window at all. You open the door and see a vista, and naturally it is a more glorious vista than nature, and not only do you get a feeling of protection from the wind and the rain, but you get that glorious protected feeling that nature does not give. For here they used up every colour." There is hardly a pause



for breath. "Even if it is a cow, it is mauve, and the trees are *green*, and it doesn't matter what colour the glass was, just so long as it's the right shape they put it in."

Upstairs, the lecturer among the pictures is in hot pursuit of a gallery. Whereas the butterfly alights on the biggest, the most perfect bloom, this lecturer flits, to concentrate on the least impressive works of art.

She is as if mesmerised before an enormous Caracci. "Now, the extraordinary merit of this picture lies in the way the artist has represented the meeting of the man and the woman. Look at the soft femininity of the woman's body, note the little dimpled hand that might have been the work of a French master, of a Boucher. And note the strong, virile quality embodied in the man's figure."

Her audience grants her rapt attention.

In yet another room a blond young man is conducting a class of

American schoolgirls. "Do you see this little scintilla of light?" He points, and the future Duchesses and Peeresses scribble in their note-books after a cursory glance at the picture.

* * * * *

So full of the world's works of art has New York become, that it is as essential for an artist to see the museums here as it is for him to visit the Prado or the Uffizi. Even the catalogue does not give any estimation of the richness of the Metropolitan Museum. Its splendour grows with every year, for American millionaires have a habit of bequeathing their collections to the State.

The exhibits are displayed with a cleanliness, a freshness, that make the Louvre look, by comparison, like a derelict storehouse.

The New York Historical Museum on Central Park, between 76th and 77th Streets, is proud of its important Egyptian antiquities and Nineveh sculptures; but it is fascinating for its more intimate and heterogeneous collection of exhibits—such an assortment that a particularly acquisitive squirrel might have been bringing them from all quarters of the city for the last three hundred years. There are early American manuscripts and papers, uniforms, costumes, silver, a charming collection of miniatures of society beauties of the 'nineties, over four hundred water-colours of the birds of America by John James Audubon (most romantic of Americans), the earliest views of the city, George Washington's letters and New York's first newspaper, *Bradford's Gazette*.

On Battery Park stands the now refaced Aquarium, originally a fort to guard the harbour where, between 1855 and 1890, eight millions of immigrants landed. Now the Chinook salmon eggs are hatched out before your eyes, and the trembling pike and electric eel from the Amazon and the Orinoco Rivers swim in blissful captivity where the Prince of Wales was received in 1860. Half-dead looking, lop-sided, giant groopers and sharks like zeppelins, with one fin out of water, soar in circles where Jenny Lind sang under the auspices of Mr. Barnum. From the boxes where the audience applauded her, the starfish from Maine and Minnesota make a design like butterflies pinned against the glass wall of their bubbling tank. To-day the children are brought to gaze into these grottoes, at the green moray, rippling in slow motion, at the stingray with fins like flapping dough, at the contented turtle in the framed water world in which a miniature bonfire is smoking and into which bubbles are pumped from above.

Like horrible plants and serpents these inhabitants wind their fluid way in and out of this world reminiscent of the fantasies of Hieronymus Bosch.

Most frightening of all monsters is the pointed-tailed ocean sunfish, which grows from one-tenth of an inch to ten feet, by so doing increasing its original weight sixty million times. The children pass to the next exhibit, where the stage has been emptied of its water and among the stones and cement a workman in captivity prepares a home for some monstrous subaqueous new arrival.

In few places can one absorb natural history without tears. New York's Natural History Museum is probably the finest the world has to offer. Exhibits there make it easy for the layman to understand a host of things, from what goes on inside a drop of water to the life history of a tree.

The fish look oddly like airships; the polyps are enlarged so that they resemble superb jewels; sponges of unbelievably delicate and complicated design; gorillas; a dramatically arranged group of stuffed elephants lit by Wendel. Every exhibit is made strikingly real to the minutest detail.

The vast sequoia is perhaps the most intelligently presented of all. No dull little black-framed tag explains "This tree is 2,000 years old," for the tree is its own autobiography, and the officials have merely translated it into terms we understand. The life-rings of the giant trunk are ticketed: life for this sequoia began in A.D. 550, so the rings are innumerable. The ring that was born in Charlemagne's time is thus indicated; other rings bear a legend telling of the events that were their contemporaries in the long march through the centuries—1492, the discovery of America; when this ring grew, Milton was living. The march goes on to Waterloo; the era of Goethe; Dickens, Thackeray, and so on and on, until the last ring that marks the death of the forest patriarch. In 1891 the tree was felled. Even then, it had perhaps run no more than half its natural span, for redwoods can live as long as three thousand years.

These exhibits are no dull, glass-cased collection. They quicken the interest and fire the imagination.

More than one touch of genius is shown in the hall housing an exhibition unlike any other known. Boxes around the walls hold the secrets of animal and bird life that in most cases only biologists understand in all their scientific intricacy. They are here made clear to all.

We see hens in a barnyard, as we have seen them many times

before. With our hand, we intercept a ray and, for the moment, we *are* those hens in the barnyard, for the scene changes and appears to us just as it appears to the hens. We peer into a new and curious world. We learn of the strange hierarchy in the barnyard. The hen which first overcomes its natural timidity appears greater in size to her neighbours. The courageous hen, we are informed by an amplified voice, assumes a "pecking right," the foundation-stone of the hens' social system. A "pecking order" is established and peace comes with it, for there is little undue pecking and cruelty. Those high in the order are kindly to their inferiors and only those far down are cruel, those with few weaker than themselves—a phenomenon which is perhaps worth the attention of those seeking to formulate new social systems.

The next box offers a pleasing scene—a man stands fishing a trout stream. To know how the trout sees the world we need only to press a button. The fish lives in a rainbow world, surely compensation for his short-sightedness. Not so fortunate, however, the turtle. He lives in a haze, his sight stimulated only by fields of strong light. His rockery, his pond, his broken twigs are so many blurs, and he has eyes only for the great glow of the sunset.

The fly lives in an outmoded world, one of violet, green and yellow, like the lighting of an old-fashioned photographer's studio, or the *pointelliste* paintings of Seurat. The many hundred facets of the fly's eye, hypersensitive to ultra-violet rays, cause this spottiness. A dog need not worry about the taste in colour of his master or mistress—he is colour-blind and, by pressing another button, we are permitted entry to his grey world. Blatant colours, garish patterns mean nothing to his eyes. This museum dog is placed in a fussy room, carpets with too much design, curtains with too much colour, an "old master" over the mantelpiece, but he remains undistressed, for colour and patterns escape him utterly.

Other exhibits in this wonderland would have delighted Alice. The sex of fish swimming in tanks is changed before our eyes; treatment of the glands creates parental feelings in other fish swimming here, leaving us to ponder the problem of the effect of the glands on ourselves—and perhaps sowing seeds of dark suspicion. Hardly an exhibit in these huge halls fails to give either food for thought or food for fun.

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We sit in wide circles in a dimly lit room with domed ceiling; the audience of old married couples, blondes, the inevitable coarse grey-haired ladies with hard mouths, and children with their parents, expectantly awaits the lecture on "The End of the World." A hidden radio plays the Liebestod. The room is darkened so that our eyes cannot penetrate the pitch blackness. Suddenly the stars of the vast infinity of the firmament appear. There is a catching of the breath from the audience, like the stirring in sleep, or the sighing of an enormous prehistoric beast.

The lecturer speaks in a quiet, sympathetic voice, using a few similes, something like poetry. He calls the moon "that big neighbour," and his talk is absorbing in the way that only simple things can be. In this vast room the illusion is complete—that we must be lying in a field in summer, looking up at the stars, with the added attraction that our vague speculations are met by magic arrows pointing out what we want to know. We thrill to see a comet collide with the earth. The lights are flashed on for a split second. One is not watching an explosion, one is in the midst of it, surrounded by fire, blood, brimstone and desolation—the end of the world.

Lovers could find no more romantic meeting-place than the Planetarium; the freezing winds of winter, here, do not prevent them from holding hands, as they look up to watch the constellations revolving from New York to London, Mexico, Greece and India.

* * * * *

Near the Julliard Music School, on 155th Street, the Heye Foundation exhibition of perishable American Indiana, or Indian Americana, is considered the best in the world, but the exhibits look like remnants left over from any old Hiawatha fancy dress. Only the native paintings done in 1870, but looking like early cave paintings, have any charm.

The Hispanic Museum, part of the same group of buildings, exhibits many second-rate Spanish artists and "attributeds." Most of the Grecos are doubtful, but enchanting little miniatures are credited to the artist's later work. The Duchess of Alba stands on the shore of a narrow stream. On her right hand one ring is inscribed with her husband's name, another bears the inscription Goya, and with this hand she points to the signature of the artist, written on the ground before her and dated 1797.

The Frick Collection, recently opened to the public, essays to preserve the "Home Atmosphere." But, for all its riches, it is depressing. One wonders why so many good pictures have been swamped by so many bad ones: the large, over-painted Vermeers, the chocolate-boxy Gainsboroughs, the late Corots, the poor Turners and the worse Whistlers overwhelm the beautiful little Vermeer, the wistful, smoky Ingres and Rembrandt's "The Polish Rider." Poor St. Jerome, by Greco, is lost among the opulent swags of the Italianate mantel. Few pictures could survive this juxtaposition, or such surroundings. The house resembles Hollywood's idea of a grand mansion in a Class B picture. A small boy stands in front of the Manet sketch of a bull fight—"Did they always kill the bull?" he asks. "Oh, no," comes the reply, "the bull sometimes killed them." With the organ, festooned with gilt cherubims, playing for the benefit of straggling visitors, the staircase and the most expensive chairs roped off, the atmosphere is that of a wedding reception at which both parties consider the match with disfavour.

Unlike Dr. Barnes of Philadelphia, whose jealously-guarded collection is not easily accessible to outsiders, the private owners of New York must be said to be extraordinarily hospitable. Mr. Jules Bache has now thrown open his house to the public so that everybody can appreciate his Vandycks, though Goya's little boy with bird-cage must be his most popular picture. But anyone sincerely interested in painting and works of art can arrange to see the lesser private collections. Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Lewisohn were pioneer collectors of nineteenth- and twentieth-century French and American pictures, and have built an additional large gallery on to their treasure-filled house to contain some of the greatest Impressionists. Mrs. Chester Dale personally conducts visitors on a baffling, whirlwind tour of one of the most extraordinary collections in the world. Her walls are not big enough for a third of her pictures, and the closets and bathrooms are stacked with Cézannes, Degas, Picassos and every other "modern" French painter. Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Clarke have the most *choisi* selection, including Cézanne's "Card Players," Seurat's "Grand Parade," Picasso's abstractions, and many other pictures formerly in the Museum of Western Art in Moscow. Around a most important group of Matisses, a room has been specially built with complementary rugs, curtains and sofas. Mr. Winthrop's Ingres and Blake drawings are particularly fine, Mr. and Mrs. Averell Harriman's collection includes the best Rousseaus, and in the last four years, Mr

William Paley has shown perspicacity in gathering together a fine group of paintings. Mr. Hamilton Rice's house contains unrivalled French furniture, tapestries, Rose Sèvres and English silver, and several historic houses such as the Roosevelt family's, and that of a typical merchant of the old school, Mr. Treadwell, have been preserved with their early American furnishings, while the history of Manhattan in engravings, picture-books and early maps is housed in the immaculate Museum of the City of New York.

V

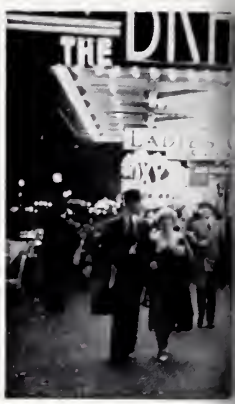
UNCONDUCTED TOURS

DENTON, in his *Brief Description of New York*, published in London in 1670, says he will "begin with the Manhatans Island, so called by the Indians, it lieth within land betwixt the degrees of 41 and 42 of North-Latitude, and is about 14 miles long, and two broad." I am also trying to describe that island which Minuit bought in 1626 from the Algonquins for twenty-four dollars. In those days the width of Manhattan was but a mere mashie shot; now it is the width of a universe. The density of the population surpasses even that of Shanghai, with 104,200 residents per square mile. Over six million telephone calls are made a day. Manhattan has 535 miles of sewers, and 800 dead animals are taken away by the Department of Sanitation every day. The New Yorker must be carried ten or twelve miles in order to be buried, and this is only one more means of transportation, for the New Yorker never walks.

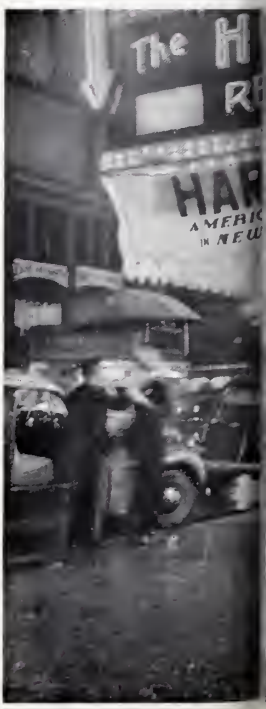
Looking down upon Manhattan, the Indian's "Island of the Hills," where only three hundred years ago no white man had set foot, a strange juxtaposition of architectures has sprung up. The stranger is surprised to find how much red brick is comprised in its buildings. The skyscraper palaces may be apricot-coloured and silver, but many of them are also of red brick, and they are surrounded by vast tracts of squalid three-storied brick houses, and the endless square blocks of Elmer Rice's "brownstone" ones. Though few of the charming wooden houses which, built in the Colonial style, are to be found in most parts of America, exist in Manhattan, New York possesses every sort of known and unknown architectural style. The brownstones, with flights of steps leading up to the front-doors and external fire-escapes, are neighbours of imitation French châteaux or spruce Georgian houses, and the churches are Byzantine, Gothic, classical and modernistic. Louis Sullivan is acclaimed as being the first to give architectural form to the skyscraper, but even now the skyscraper is sometimes built in the French Romanesque style. The architectural

BROADWAY PATTERN

PARK PATTERN



New York



Night Lights

detail of New York is seldom satisfactory, and to a skyscraper of the most functional design an imitation Baroque ornament may be applied for no reason at all. Yet even the most "wedding-cakey" decoration becomes effective on such a gigantic scale.

The civic buildings are often the least impressive; built for the most part by the friends of the political party in power at the time, they remain merely monuments to Graft.

The rich and the poor live side by side in New York. A row of squalid rooming houses is often wedged between the most expensive hotels, while a few paces from the most fashionable section of Park Avenue, the urchins chalk the façades of their slum dwellings. Steinway grand pianos are made in the centre of Hell's Kitchen, and, next to the fashionable little houses of Lower Sutton Place, is the fresh-meat slaughter-house. New York is made up of small towns, villages and settlements, so that a stranger is never so inconspicuous as he might expect, for in each neighbourhood he is recognised as such.

When we talk of Broadway, it is of the central, theatre, sky-sign section of a twenty-five mile thoroughfare. Broadway by day—the countless signs lose significance. Lost in a web of wires, struts and girders, these sightless bulbs look like Chinese lettering. The eyes select, painfully but irresistibly, from the web—WALGREEN—NANKING BOY—SHIRTMAKERS—BAR SERVICE—FOLTIS ELECTRIC SHINE 5 CENTS—STEUBEN TAVERN — ADMIRATION CIGARS — SHANTY — STETSON HATS—CANDY—OLD GOLD CAFE-TERIAS — CHOW MEIN DINNER 50 CENTS. . . . Broadway on a clear night—this is the "Great White Way," when coloured lights soar high and a floodlit clock seems to hang in heaven. Gargantuan "Sunkist Oranges and Lemons" flash into being and are gone again. Wrigley's "Spearmint" fish blow bubbles as they swim. (Four men, they say, watch the fish in their thousand lights, so that should one bulb fail they can telephone head-quarters.) The heavens flash: CLEVER HEADS CALL FOR CALVERT WHISKIES — CHEVROLET — ORPHEUM DANCE PALACE—INTERNATIONAL CASINO . . . Below, Father Duffy, in bronze, stands ignored.

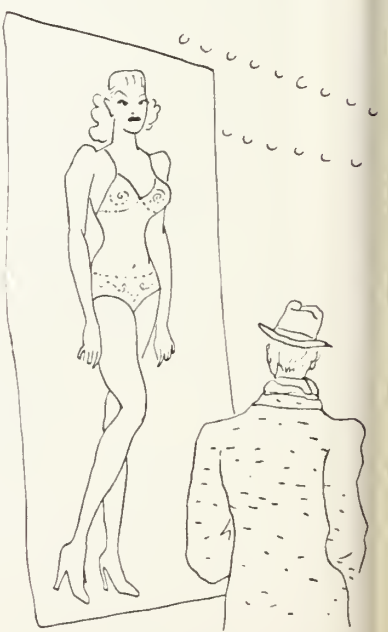
Lights drain colour from the faces of the crushed, slow-moving crowd below, and nimble electric lights of all colours are twinkling, glaring, jerking, zigzagging, darting, fidgeting, tumbling, cascading and waltzing gaily above on their one-dimensional plateau, as if in

mockery of the slow progress below them. Broadway faces are hard, not often happy, although some have breath-taking beauty. But they all possess that American poise which gives each face its individual character.

No more than a hundred years ago, Joseph Delacroix, "a distiller of cordials," provided a number of lamps to "light up the dark road to his Vauxhall Garden." Those were Broadway's first lights above Canal Street.

Broadway at night, in rain—the streets are glass reflectors of the lights radiating from windows and doorways. The red lights of ATLAS PRESCRIPTIONS throw a rosy glow on to the tarpaulin awning of the "Morning Papers" booth. In the haze of red and blue neon lights, the sports car resembles the Aurora Borealis; yet its owner is waiting with hungry eyes for one more green light to appear. The window-panes are glittering rubies and diamonds of raindrops. Men and women are human chameleons. With every step they take their faces change colour; yet, in the brilliant glare, they remain pale, like actors at rehearsal. Like European school-children, they are all goloshed.

The appeal of the attractions on 42nd Street is universal. Life begins early in the morning. Uniformed "barkers" prowl back and forth extolling in raucous voices the current fare at the cinemas. Electric signs promise sensations, violence, bargains and "feminine pulchritude." Passers-by, seeking vicarious distraction, stand in auction rooms, with no intention of buying. Amusement arcades attract with the Mutescope, showing "The Electric Chair," "The Chamber of Love," "After the Bath," or "Nude Kisses," at the bargain price of



one cent. The rows of telephone booths, with their occupants making their calls of love or business, provide a free if unjoyous peepshow. The underclothing displayed in the windows is partially obscured by the lettering chalked on the plate-glass: "Again Slashed!—Our Loss the City's Gain!" At the kerb, two men, demonstrating the durability of their merchandise, are holding a silk stocking over a lighted candle. Hands deep in their pockets, grim with grievance, a knot of men pace up and down with placards exhorting passers-by not to patronise the hotel or shop that has offended. "Picketing" has been adopted by the two powerful Trades Unions in the country, but has become too general to be effective. Only the most conscientious citizens will avoid these commercial organisations that are claimed to have treated labour unfairly.

"Don't open them here on the sidewalk," advises the furtive seller of booklets and sealed packages bearing suggestive titles. After a few moments of feverish trade, feigning terror of the police, the hawker of pornography dives into the crowd to be seen no more, thereby escaping the fury of his disappointed customers, who have by now discovered the innocuousness of his wares.

The noises have been borrowed from Coney Island—radio and victrola shops relay a never-ending programme of "fanfare" music. Rifle-shots thrash the air with monotonous explosions as the pageant of ducks floats by in the side-show, or a ping-pong ball balances precariously on a water jet (you may be sure if there are prizes the "sight" will be wrong).

The legless beggar crawls by, led by his dog, harnessed with offertory box. The freaks inside the Emporium, however, are paid. They exhibit themselves with bad grace. Albert Alberta is half man, half woman. Divided perpendicularly, she has one cheek shaven, the other rouged. One breast is encased in a jewelled brassière, the other hirsutely covered by nature. One leg is trousered, the other draped in regal velvet. Albert Alberta, who might have been born in Marseilles or Brooklyn, has personality and gaiety, and explains in a Polish accent: "My bruder he asks do I like to go out with de goils or de boys; and I say to him, I say, I prefer to go out with de goils, because de boys dey expect too moorch for ten cents." Her "brother," obviously a half-caste, cannot speak. He makes unintelligible sounds which she claims to understand.

The man with two mouths puts his tongue out of one and blows smoke through the other in the centre of his left cheek—a wound that was never allowed to heal. The man who can stretch himself to become four inches taller can also, by volition, stop his own heart.

Sealo, the seal-boy, with flaps for arms, stands beside Freda, the dog-faced girl, who is "in every other way the perfect little mademoiselle." The evening papers have already arrived, and men sit reading the headlines—"Pig Woman under Knife," "Woman's Rival for Mate's Love," "Fight for Life is On"—while black boys spit and apply vibrating bandages to their shoes.

* * * * *

It is Thanksgiving Day, and Broadway becomes more fantastic than ever. The Macy Parade is moving between the cliffs of build-ings; its great helium-filled giants—Gulliver and Pinocchio—its dragons and nameless monsters blot out the sky, held to earth by medieval soldiers and fairy-tale characters. Traffic is at a standstill. Unlike the dreary *papier mâché* monsters of festivals in Nice, these gas-filled giants have lightness and beauty. When the parade is done, they are released and allowed to float in their world of unreality until aeroplanes shoot them down.

* * * * *

Night sees the dance-halls in full swing. To "Roseland" anyone can go alone, pay seventy-five cents admission and pick up a dance partner. In a low-ceilinged inferno of noise, dark amber lights adding to its unreality, the swing band blares with a ruthless swagger. Sales-girls, typists, telephone operators, manicurists and models dance with their beaux to the rhythm of the "Shag," so many tadpoles spilled from their jam-jar. The waltz turns the tadpoles into gaping goldfish as they circle with gum-chewing jaws. The smell of double-mint gum permeates the atmosphere of this monstrous paradise of black, orange and pink. Women wear tense expressions as the men, buttocks protruding, bury their noses suffocatingly in their partners' hair. In formal rows, the backless, satin-clad professionals wait to be picked; of course the young West Point cadet selects the most blonde of all. The two crawl around in silence; the music stops, but the hands linger on the partner's back. The air is so thick that an attendant draws a Venetian blind, letting in a jet of cold draught and the sunlight of Broadway lights below.

* * * *

The Macy Parade.

Park Avenue, with wide doubled traffic separated by beds of burnt grass, is the quickest avenue along which to move up and down by car. Built only in the last twenty-five years, it contains the largest hotels and apartment-houses. Fifth Avenue boasts the Empire State Building and Radio City, the tallest buildings in the world. It is perhaps inconsistent that New Yorkers, who have such a love for celebrities, do not know the names of their most brilliant architects. Consequently the work of Raymond Hood and others on Radio City is insufficiently appreciated. Radio City is planned uniquely as a group of skyscrapers; each building is relative to another in the general design, and the whole is connected by a world of shops, offices and restaurants honeycombing its base. Almost without seeing daylight it would be possible to breakfast, shop, visit the consulates of six different countries, procure a passport, visit the Science Museum, lunch, enjoy movies projected on to the largest screen in the world, watch the radio performances of the National Broadcasting Company, have a hair-cut, skate, dine and dance here all in one day. It is the logical extension of the sky-scraper concept, for if you build ninety stories high, why not build down a few floors too? Radio City is a city of twenty thousand inhabitants, with twelve acres devoted to business and entertainment, including two theatres (one the largest in the world), and eighteen restaurants. From the plate-glass windows of the English Grill, one can watch the skaters waltzing around their sunken platform of ice, while "canned" music plays selections from Meyerbeer and Waldteufel. It takes but twenty seconds to reach from the street level of the noisiest city to the quiet, crystal air and sunshine of a mountain peak on the 87th floor. Lunching on this pinnacle of luxury, one looks down on the slums, tenements and eternal shops of Up- and Down-town New York, and far into the Bronx and Queens Counties.

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If you look down upon Central Park from the tower of Radio City, it appears, at first sight, to be deserted, and only by degrees do the little lice-like cars assert themselves, moving in crocodile formation along curved roads, laid out with no discernible plan. But if you descend from your eminence to walk in the park, you are struck by its curious, plantless desolation in comparison with the sophistication of the surrounding buildings. The dun-coloured, artificial hills remind you of a geographical model, and the winter trees are spidery

and black. Great rocks, cannon-ball in colour, look theatrical. This park is like a landscape of some other planet. But on Sunday, Central Park becomes human. It is the gambolling ground for parents, children, nursemaids and dogs. The unleashed dogs tear up and down the hillocks. A crowd collects, for a bulldog has caused a situation in the dog world. A tremendous barking is set up, and on all sides are seen distracted women tugging vainly at dogs on chains, which have sat down resolutely on their hind-quarters and now refuse to move. The perambulators, with babies half visible beneath the coverlets, are wheeled three and four abreast so that the pedestrian cannot pass. The roller-skaters grind by in a flash, and twist so adroitly at the steep corners, past the perambulators, that errant children, and even the trick cyclist, are in no danger.

The skaters foregather on the asphalt of a circle near the Esplanade, where a large crowd of fascinated pedestrians watch these beings who seem to have come from another world, with their superhuman speed and grace. Within this circle, every type is moving. The tough kid in corduroy, with gum; the buffoon playing pranks and waltzing backwards; the girl with the green handkerchief tied under her chin; the white-faced, dark-haired Bronzino-portrait type. Only when they fall do they become of this world. It is a cold day and the children have their gaiters on, but it is not too cold for the ducks to come out, and their quacking can be heard from the highest windows in the surrounding skyscrapers. A part of the pond is frozen over and the Inspector chivvies the boys on: "How can you skate if you throw stones?" A Greek selling hot chestnuts is doing a brisk trade, while Christopher Columbus, in bronze, points onwards and upwards. The statues in Central Park are an oddly assorted crowd of celebrities. Scott and Burns wonder to find themselves in the company of an unnamed boy with a horrible-looking dog. Three thousand miles from his native Stratford, Shakespeare reads his scroll in Central Park. His statue was erected in accordance with the dying instructions of a past President of the Shakespeare Society.

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St. Paul's Church was built in a wheatfield in 1764. Here Washington used to pray, and the little classical building still stands peacefully in its churchyard. Although a contemporary newspaper described it as "So large and ornate a building in a place so remote and sequestered, so difficult of access, and to which the population could

never extend," there has sprung up around it all the wild welter of twentieth-century Downtown activity. Inside the church, in the musty odour of old buildings, a few figures kneel in prayer. In the graveyard outside, the tombstones, weathered by the passage of two hundred years, are softened by the sprouting spikes of hyacinth and crocus. The eye turns bewildered from the slogans of gilded signs in the street to the old inscriptions on the tombs. The voices of to-day proclaim: "Collars and Ties Arranged," "Do you know what is always the correct thing to do?", "Banana Splits," "Study Hagstrom's Maps," "Carry Charles Wodiska's Diamond Watches;" while an ancient stone tells us that beneath lies the body of "John Jones, the son of John Jones, who departed this life aged four years and four months, on December 13th in 1768. Ah, most cruel and sudden death; thus to take his harmless breath." Alongside the agency for "Witcherie Farms and real old Virginia Sausage," lie the remains of Eziral Wwonsin, whose friends engraved on his tombstone: "Go home, my friend, and cease your tears, I must lie here till Christ appears. Repent in time while time you haive. There is no repentance in the grave." The young man on the hoarding, high up on the syndicate building, is asking the young girl to have a Coca Cola; beneath them, the old tablets are inscribed: "In memory of David McLean of Kilmarnock, Scotland, who died in this city of yellow fever in the midst of his usefulness"; and "In memory of the pieties and virtues of Effingham Warner, who resigned this life in full assurance of a blissful immortality, 1796."

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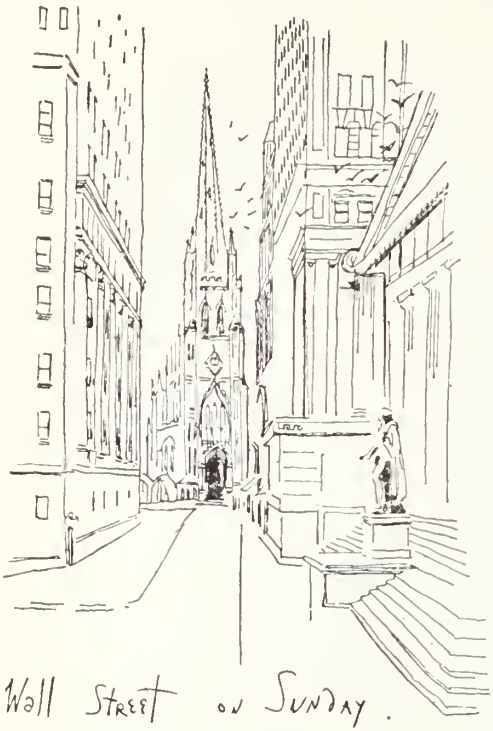
The plumes of steam from the city's heating plant, spouting at varying intervals from the underworld, are the only signs, on a Sunday, that Wall Street is not part of a long forgotten, dead city. A few cars are abandoned at the roadside, but there is no policeman to ask questions. The unaccustomed quiet gives to the labyrinthine street the remoteness of a former civilisation, the unreality of a Piranesi engraving. The black, Gothic spike of Trinity Church seems unaccountably wedged between architectural clefts of office buildings, and, in Exchange Street, the high bridge spanning the narrow street might be a bridge of sobs in an attenuated Venice.

The quiet is only dispelled at the hour by the chimes of the church clock. The green-throated pigeons fly down from their pediment home on the Treasury Building, circle in the air before alighting on



the steps of Mr. Morgan's deserted bank, from which they are frightened by the sudden appearance of a stray dog.

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Beyond the Battery, which is the prow of Manhattan, lies the water-front with its smells of salt, tar, rope, seaweed and decaying fish. Along South Street on the East Side, where the old Dutch houses stood, there are still some charming Colonial buildings, but they have been swallowed up by the dock-land life. The red-brick building with wooden colonnades and the Madonna carved on the balcony is the Sailor's Mission of Our Lady of the Rosary. The tall building with the lighthouse beacon is the Seamen's Institute, and the old two-storied houses painted red, yellow and green sell manilla rope, wire and fishing tackle. In the markets of the Franklin and Roosevelt Fish Companies, the vast silver and scarlet fishes and the insipid, inflated fish from the Great Lakes are weighed in the hanging basket-scales. Barrels overflow with crawling snails, jerking crabs and St. Vitus's dark-green lobsters. Here are clams, mussels and octopi to supply the whole island. Along the wharves, the prows peering on to the highway, are boats of every nationality with families living aboard, their washing hanging up to dry. Huge packing-cases marked "Ford, Made in U.S.A." are being loaded on to the Japanese freightboat, *Loi-Sho Maru*. The bums who hang around all wharves sit here eating peanuts, and, to provide a contrast, the millionaires take off from the Downtown airport. For here, like clock-work each day, the flocks of waterplanes arrive from Long Island to deposit their occupants within a minute of their offices. In the afternoon, twenty minutes' flight takes them back again to their indoor tennis-courts, backgammon boards and Scotch-and-sodas.

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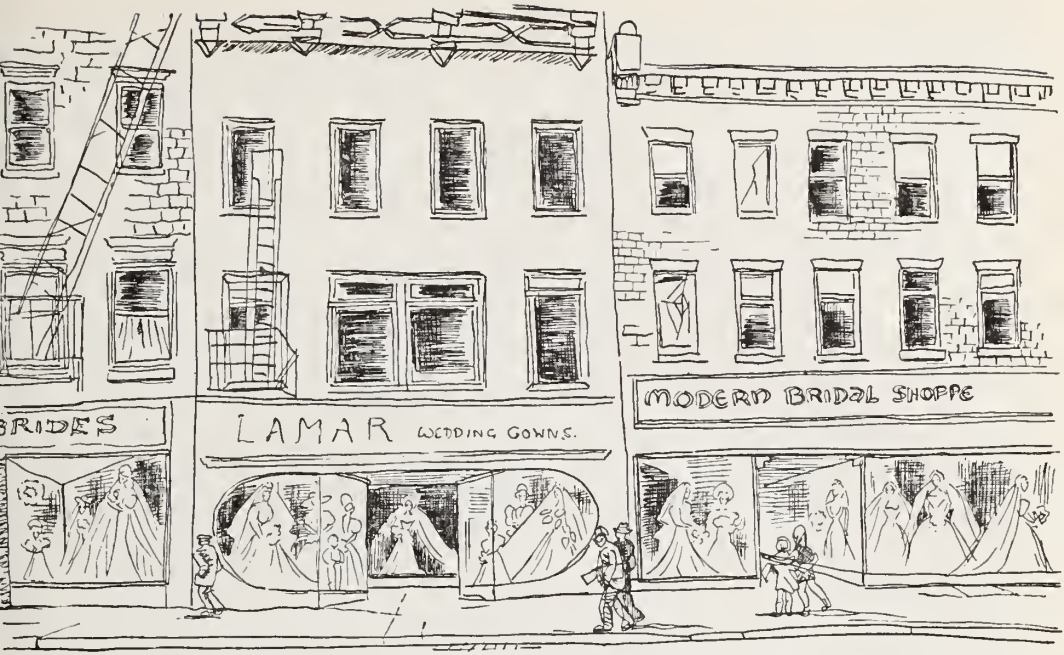
WATERFRONT, 90° ABOVE

WATERFRONT, 10° BELOW

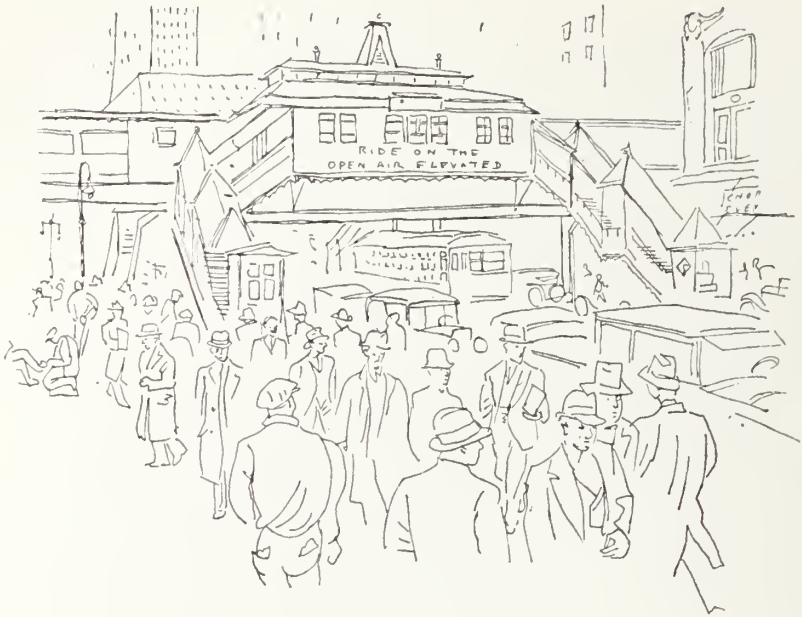
The Street of the Brides



In spite of acute competition, certain streets will be devoted entirely to the sale of certain varieties of goods. Along one every shop sells every sort of radio equipment; along another, every sort of ecclesiastical appurtenance is displayed—brocades, ornaments, chalices, candlesticks and religious figures. By Ridge and Grand Streets, every sort of truss or corselet can be procured, the windows creating a surrealistic *mélange* of isolated limbs and torsos, bandaged and supported artificially, and every sort of surgical aid—crutches, second, third and fourth hand.

In the Bowery's heart, in one of the poorest quarters, where only recently the worst slums of New York have been pulled down, one street consists entirely of bridal shops. Both sides of Grand Street are devoted to windows displaying a pageant of life-size immaculate brides in static gesticulation. The snowy satin, lace, tulle veils and artificial flowers are dazzling. In the Ethel Shoppe, a bride and her entourage are so white that even their hair is white to match. The attendant bridesmaids are lined up, complete with bouquets and child train-bearers and pages. The corner shop creates a nuptial apotheosis, with silver horseshoes, wedding bells, orange blossom, photographs of wedding groups, and even a groom himself in faultless attire.

Under an elevated railway on Second Avenue, in an even less joyous district, a row of shops caters to the spirit of Mardi Gras, selling



toy trumpets, tinsel hats, confetti, masks and favours. Where Second and Third Avenues begin, the pawnbrokers' windows display musical instruments, fishing tackle, a tram conductor's belt studded with small compartments for change, baby boxing-gloves, slide-rules, greeting-cards, pistols, sex pamphlets and a typewriter.

Three-quarters of the city's clothing is made between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. Throughout the day, a strange procession takes place of young men—"feather-horses" they are called—carrying large racks of flowered silks, blowing in the wind. Dozens of identical fur stoles, on hangers, are held high, like banners in a religious procession. Fur collars of every colour are followed by white collars as crisp as pastry frills. On trolleys, hundreds of uniform overcoats and ball-dresses bring up the rearguard. At lunch time, the wholesale garment-workers pour out upon the streets in such density that special regulations have to be made for Up- and Downtown pedestrian traffic. Except in size the warehouse sections are similar to those in any manufacturing city. But here, ten blocks consist entirely of vans selling Leghorn eggs!

* * * * *

EVERYTHING A BRIDE COULD DESIRE


PROGRESS HOTEL
ROOMS
-35 & 40¢
BLACK EYE
SPECIALIST
剃髭 一毛
剪髮 二毛
CHARLES
WAGNER
MASTER
TATTOOER
25¢


BLACK EYES
MADE NATURAL
DOWN STAIRS
BY
ROCK GRILLO
ROCK'S GRILLO
BLACK EYE
SPECIALIST
SHAVE 10¢
HAIRCUT 20¢

TAE

BOWERY

In spite of its reputation and name, Hell's Kitchen, on Tenth Avenue, is a colourless and ugly quarter. In no way spectacular, its present claim to fame can only be that the Irish-Italian children living in the flat houses have no opportunity to play anywhere but in the streets, and grow up with a poor understanding of the rights of others. But to visit the Bowery is like visiting another city. The "triumphal arch" of the Bowery might be the salient feature of a Chicago, Philadelphia or Kansas City. The architecture is different. The vast grey façades of the office buildings have not the lightness of New York skyscrapers; there are no sequins glittering in the windows; the atmosphere is heavy and sinister. The electric signs shine less sparklingly as they light up the words "Hotel for Men—Bed with Shower 20 cents." To the Bowery descends all surplus human matter. Those who have failed to "make good" eke out a colourless existence there, for the Bowery is no longer the full-blooded centre of fighting and drinking with which its name is synonymous. No contemporary Dirty-Face Jack pulls a revolver in the saloon. Hell-Cat Maggie's day is over, and few women are seen in the Bowery. It is too poor a district for them, although in the nearest "Burlesques" a handful of ageing nudes, shivering in the cold, parade their bruised legs, scalded-cream buttocks and seamed stomachs. Only men are to be seen in the streets, or eating in the Park Row restaurants, whose plate-glass windows advertise in Bon Ami lettering that "snouts plus cabb" are fifteen cents, and pea soup five. This is the section of the "flop-houses," where many beds crowded into one room make a nightmare dormitory.

The gayest locales in the Bowery are the barbers' shops, with the red, white and blue poles outside. Here, any old bum can be transplanted, for ten cents, to another realm, with the ecstatic eclipses of hot-towel treatments, and tender soapy ministrations. In the Bowery Barber School, an aged tramp is lying in a new world of delight, while his ministrant, having already shaved him, rubs his wrinkled face with lotion. On the foot-rests below, where the white sheet ends, a pair of boots protrude, riddled with holes, that would have delighted Van Gogh as they delight the small boys who do the lathering and the shoe shines. In white coats many sizes too large for them, the boys dance like dervishes around the old man who lies back, quite unaware that matches are being gingerly placed in the holes of his boots. The consent of silence from the barber is the signal for the fuse to be lit, and the excitement reaches new bounds as, one by one, the matches are

ignited and the boys, in a circle, wait as if for a bomb to explode. But a stranger passes, disapproves of the scene, blows out the matches and leaves. The old tramp senses some interruption, endeavours to raise his wizened face, but a hot rag is slapped on again, and the experiment is repeated. Again the boys retreat in anticipation of the wild moment when the matches burn their way through and the "hot-footing" has reached its climax. The barber now bends double with laughter, and the children do a Voodoo dance of savage sadism, waving their long sleeves at the old man lying beneath his steaming poultice. The heart-beats cease with the suspense, but this time the harlequinade joke is successful, the desired crescendo is attained. Feet, matches, hot towels and shaving froth are scattered into the air; but, with the cessation of agony, the tramp laughs his toothless laugh too, and the boys dance around his chair, making pantomimes of love, holding his old head in their arms, making mock kisses at it and screwing it this way and that, like a doll's, while everyone roars.

The barbers' shops include tattooing as part of their business; and the windows display birds, butterflies, serpents and anchors, the work of tattoo experts. "Kid Tou" is the master tattooer, and "Frenchie Sailor White" exhibits photographs to prove his art. An enormous wrestler is shown, both from the front and the back, with tattooing like lace over his entire body. A string of birds flies around his neck; Our Lord, with rayed aura, has pride of place on the solar plexus, and, on closer inspection, the derrière proves to be a bower of roses. This wrestler is a living piece of chintz, a dilating and inflating "toile de Jouy." One out of every ten Americans is tattooed. In the Bowery, a broken heart costs twenty-five cents, Leonardo's "Last Supper" a hundred dollars. An invitation is tendered by the Tattoo Boys' Club for a dance next Saturday evening; the entrance fee is stipulated, but no intimation is given as to the form of dress.

Where blows are so frequent an occurrence, the bill-boards advertise experts in the treatment of all injuries. Vast all-seeing eyes, like sur-realist symbols, accompany the sign-painters' proclamations: "Black Eyes Made Natural," "Original Black Eye Painters—Twenty Years' Experience." We see examples of "before and after" the craftsman has been at work.

Down the steep steps, each of which is marked with the words, "Progress Hotel—Progress Hotel—Progress Hotel," two old men ad-vance. They shamble through the doorway, stop for a moment to share a swig of gin from a medicine-bottle, and join the crowds that

WINDOW DRESSINGS

BOWERY DESIGN

JUNK PLOT


R
WISE
NIZ
BODIES
RED
PLY CO. INC.
ATORS
POST
NO
BILLS

SHADOWS OF DELINQUENCY

Abraham Lincoln in Nuts


AST
SALE
84
SALE
29
98
27
SALE
669
SALE
8
SALE
9


WA
the LINDBERGH
LINE

THE BALCONY OF ILLUSION

move through the Diamond Exchange (where, without police protection, jewels of infinite value are scrutinised by diamond merchants and are bought and sold from hand to hand), past the push-cart of heavily scented roasting chestnuts. Then they move out of sight beyond the clock that indicates, simultaneously, the time in Moscow, Tokio, Rome, San Francisco and here, in the Bowery.

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Every twenty-five years the social sections change. Some rents drop, undesirable neighbours appear and the original community moves away. The group that centred in Canal Street moved to Washington Square, from thence to Chelsea and on to Murray Hill, which became the social vortex of the gay 'nineties around Stanford White, the elegant architect of his day. The Murray Hill Association ruled that in this neighbourhood no buildings could be used for business purposes, and the Messrs. Morgan, Baker and Huntingdon, confident of respectability, built themselves mansions in the style of some antique period. When the Murray Hill Association considered an apartment as a residence, the heyday of Murray Hill was over. The apartment buildings, twenty storeys high, overwhelmed the private houses, and even the church at 34th Street was embedded. The entrance is still there, but with twenty-five floors above it the services are discontinued.

Mrs. Robert Bacon, living at No. 1, Park Avenue, in a red and black erection with gables, built in possibly the neo-Dutch, possibly the Normandy style, found herself, because of the draught caused by the too intimate proximity of these new skyscrapers, unable to light a fire without the smoke pouring into every room. So that her flues should have proper ventilation, the authorities have built from her three-storeyed shack brick chimney-stacks seventeen storeys high.

To-day, in their cages with embossed ceilings, thick turkey carpets and carved-wood walls, the club-members still enjoy the sanctuary of the easy chair, proud that, in the exhausting atmosphere of dry steam-heat turned on to excess, and clouds of heavy cigar smoke, the palms should thrive in each room that yet boasts its gigantic ornamental fire-place. At the Vanderbilt Hotel, where Caruso stayed twenty-five years ago, the famous Della Robbia room exists forgotten; and unnoticed now are the rows of red-brick houses, their façades embellished with enamelled plaques like giant turquoise tortoise-brooches. The inevitable moving-on has claimed, in turn, Lower Fifth Avenue, Central Park

and Upper Fifth Avenue, and those districts on the East River where the sunlight pours through the windows at breakfast-time and the boats pass in endless pageants, such as Beekman Terrace and Gracie Square. In her story, *A Cycle of Manhattan*, Thyra S. Winslow tells of an immigrant family beginning their American life on the Lower East Side, progressing to the Bronx, moving to Riverside Drive and, finally, to Park Avenue, from whence the artist son goes to Washington Square.

Mr. Charles M. Schwab, president of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, still lives in a steel-coloured brick copy of the Château of Azay-le-Rideau, and Mrs. William Randolph Hearst in an ornate apartment, beside the Hudson River. But Riverside Drive now possesses no particular *cachet* as an address. Many respectable families have moved, and their homes have become rooming-houses. To-day, the social neighbourhoods are less definitely marked. Great dough-coloured cement towers now hover over the houses given as parting presents by the Edwardian beaux to retired actresses and cocottes. Their architectural individuality is swamped. In these apartment-blocks, with their hundreds of identical windows, the rubber plant or cactus, as it fights for existence over the radiator, is the only expression of freedom. There are five miles of these same blocks, with twenty blocks to a mile. Fifty yards away from this sunless district, the cars dash arrogantly along Commissioner Moses' Speedway Drive, from the Battery to the Harlem River, their occupants hardly noticing the houses that were once so proud. But the rock deposits brought down from New England by the glaciers twenty-five thousand years ago, adapt themselves, naturally, to the modern plan, and the strange formations that flank the clover-leaf turns of the Drive look like the foundations for an elaborate rockery scheme. From Mr. John Rockefeller's Fort Tryon, the highest point in the city, New York seems remote and forgotten.

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On the West Side, in the "Fifties," a red-brick hotel shelters a group of English immigrants against the prevailing characteristics of the city in which they find themselves spending their fading days. Except for the stifling steam heat, the atmosphere is that of a residential Spa hotel. On the settee in the hall, so that she can enjoy scraps of conversation with those who walk in and out, sits an old English lady with a skin lividly white, and an impossible wig improbably brown, as if cotton-wool had been dipped in gravy. In her

Backwaters:
Cherry Street
(Left)
&
Greenwich Village


AVIATA
Buena Suerte


GOLD DIGGER
DICK

everyday Bunting

lap is her "bait"—a skinny dog with huge eyes and butterfly-wing ears. In the *va-et-vient* Rosie is often picked out for attention and becomes the incentive for many bird and baby noises. . . . "Is Rosie a bright dog?" "Oh, she can pick up a trick in no time, she's *exceptional*."

A "confirmed bachelor" with grey hair is more than willing to pass a certain time of day with Rosie and her owner. "How long did your tulips last?" he asks. "The next day? Mine lasted until yesterday; Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday—that's four days, and do you know how much they cost? Nineteen cents; about nine-pence!" . . . "They say that Florida is going on the rocks this year just because Lord and Lady So-and-So have gone to Bermuda. Every-one else has gone there, trying to hobnob." . . . "I don't hear you unless you're facing me." "Oh, you read the lips?" "No, I don't; I have to turn my head or I can't hear you." . . . "Did you go out in evening clothes the other night? Mr. Schneider said he saw two ladies go out and one of them wore a gown he made on Seventh Avenue two years ago. He saw enough of it to recognise it. He styled the dress, you know, that Mrs. Roosevelt wore at the Inauguration. He styles dresses for the wholesale place and they sell them retail. Well, it must have been the dress because he said he saw enough of it to recognise it." . . . "It does you good to go out once and again. It keeps your spirits up." "I'm getting into awful hot water. I asked two ladies to come in and play bridge to-morrow night and I had entirely forgotten I was asked somewhere else! Tch! And now I have two things to do to-morrow night, and the same thing happened to me last week! . . . Tch! Tch! Tch! Well, Rosie, I think I have to say bye-bye. Well, bye-bye, Rosie."

The elevator rattles upstairs to a room where the great actress now gives elocution lessons. Lengths of brocade are draped on every piece of furniture. The lamps are hung with large bags. Telegrams and photographs are pinned into permanent disorder. "Oh, I'm so tired. My pupils read so *badly*. I've one woman who teaches in a school and she reads Milton to me, oh, so badly! She *can't* keep her voice up, and she crashes on and on, incapable of understanding a half-beat. She never pauses before a He with a capital H, and says He as if he were the butcher boy; and she cannot put the reverence into Our Maker, and gabbles on as if it was 'our dressmaker'! And I told a man he must go and see a doctor about his legs; you *can't* be an actor if your legs are hung on strings like a marionette's. You can't be an actor if you don't act from the legs down; just as you must have deep

hands, I told him, and learn to keep the voice down. You can't have that nasal tone that women use to their husbands if they don't love them. You can't speak Shakespeare as if the words were your own; you wouldn't recite the Songs of David as if you had written them yourself? Now listen to this." A beautiful ululation is heard: "Come nott when I am deaghd, your foolish teahrs to dropp about my headhdd. Thairr let the wind sigh, and the plover cry. . . . Now, you see you *can't* speak those words in an off-hand way! Oh, when I *think* of Sarah as Pelléas and I see Orson Welles' Brutus, like an obstetrician, I don't know what the Theatre's coming to."

Framed in the windows opposite is a living Degas created by the American Ballet School at rehearsal. The piano cannot be heard, and twenty ballerinas in white tulle, with coronets of white flowers, are impelled, as if by magic, to a soundless interweaving of rhythms, lasting until the crack of doom. The scene in the illuminated emptiness of the practice-room gains in brightness as the afternoon wanes.

* * * * *

The quiet and seemingly isolated district of Chelsea has been inhabited, since the eighteenth century, by the Irish. The dark green and crimson ironwork balconies are like those along the Thames Embankment, and the superintendent doormen, dressed as London Bobbies, intensify the British atmosphere rather self-consciously.

Greenwich Village still possesses its own savour. The tempo is slower, the life less vital than it was in the days of O. Henry, and Mark Twain. The artists' quarter has yielded to slums or suburban commercialism.

Washington Square, in another age the most fashionable neighbourhood and centre of Irving's "Knickerbocker Society," with charming, uniform houses of red brick, retains what Henry James described as "established repose." Bobbles, like the fringes of Edith Wharton's antimacassars, still hang from the plane trees with their artificial, sun-dappled bark, but the square garden seems forlorn. The women on the public seats, watching their sleeping offspring, yawn indifferently.

Only twice a year, in the spring and the autumn, do these grass plots again become exhibition grounds for neighbouring artists to display their daubs, but it is hard to believe that, to-day, another Whistler may be struggling in the Village. In the street off the square, badly needing a coat of paint, is the Provincetown Playhouse, where

Eugene O'Neill was first played, and where, not so long ago, Cummings' "He" was performed. It was here that poets and painters sat through the night in ecstatic and aesthetic discussion, but now they speak less of Cézanne, and you hear that Henry Ford is an "industrial genius and they should leave him alone."

To lure sightseers, the Village is still tricked out in the frills of Bohemia. To the "Vanguard," the last stronghold of the traditional long-haired poets, artists and writers bring their own liquor and entertain each other with impromptu acts. A poem written only yesterday will be given its first rendition; or old Mr. Titus, the octogenarian, will read once again his "Face on the Barroom Floor." Someone may sing the prologue to *Pagliacci*; and, after each offering, the guests will toss a few coins on to the floor. At Jack Delaney's bar, a "Quartier Latin" atmosphere is attempted. The El Gaucho boasts a uniformed doorman and Voodoo dancers "shoeing the mare." One of the singing waiters at Jimmy Kelly's used to be Izzy Ballin, who grew to become Irving Berlin. Now they give cabaret turns of tap dancing, East Indian and bubble dances for those who are not bored by the banal. The Blue Heron, The Pepper Pot and the Nut Club still persist, and at the Wild Dog bar skinny corncrake, chili con carne and crèpes suzette, "queen of desserts," are served to the no longer shocking accompaniment of ribald songs on the guitar and the chatter of wild aesthetes—all for seventy-five cents.

Landmarks remain. The arch originally erected as a temporary tribute to Washington; the huge brick mass of the Women's Gaol, looking like an apartment house beside the ornate tower of the Jefferson Court House. Number One Fifth Avenue, the block built ten years ago by Archipenko, is no longer strikingly modern, and Mrs. Whitney's Museum, spruce and smart for such an environment, still hopes wistfully to discover a genius.

No struggle remains in Greenwich Village. Continental restaurants have, many of them, failed and closed their doors; the aspiring poets, working in gas-lit rooms with splintered floors, unable to pay their six dollars a week rent, have moved on, perhaps to the "soulless world of commerce." In the slums, discarded clothing decays on disused balconies. Beneath the fire-escape stands an old man, waiting philosophically until someone has knives or saws for sharpening.

A few "characters" remain. One of them is Joe Gould, about the loss of whose teeth Cummings was inspired to write a poem. When he comes from his hotel room, tiny as a bathroom, with his bald head

and Vandyck beard, Joe Gould is often mistaken for Trotsky. His room is stacked with notebooks, in which he writes and re-writes countless versions of his "Aural History" or "Mea Tempora," facts and anecdotes he gleans from contemporaries. Each day he writes one hundred lines, except on holidays or to celebrate the marriage or birthday of a friend, when he writes two hundred. In spite of the interest of publishers, he refuses to have his work issued.

Life in the Village could be very pleasant. The houses are charming and restful. The atmosphere of Patchen Place is that of Jane Austen's day, but no one comes through the white doors, no noise is heard behind the white windows. McDougall Alley has houses like those in an English mews, and the peace is uninterrupted by the unloading of rejected masterpieces. The Jumble Shop Bar, around the corner, provides diversion for the few remaining intellectuals. The scene designer finds life pleasing enough as he works in his lofty studio, built by Lafarge. He is making drawings for the Scenic Artists' Union. "The horizon point to be one third the height of the stage," and he sets to with T-square and pin-pointed pencil. Hour after hour he works, peacefully "goddamning" in turn his eraser, his compass, the carpenters and other more successful designers.

* * * * *

Thus far the various sections described have been entirely American; but New York contains vast foreign cities within itself, so immense that New York is the largest Italian city in the world. It is also the largest Jewish city. But, so great is the intrinsic personality of New York, that even those immigrants who have not learned to speak the language have become impregnated by the national character; and, however foreign the quarter, by something in the climate, the buildings or the very vibrations from the pavements, New York always asserts itself. Mr. Bercovici conducts his readers on a "round the world" trip in New York City, explaining that the races of Manhattan group themselves as in Europe—that the Spaniards are the neighbours of the French, the Germans of the Austrians, and that the Greeks are situated behind the Italians. But we have lost Mr. Bercovici, and we find ourselves again in the Bowery, where the ceaseless traffic beneath the Elevated Railway batters the ear-drums with its hollow, rasping growl.

Turning out of the Bowery into narrow Pell Street, Chinatown's Broadway, the sudden quiet is such that every inhabitant might be hidden in opium dreams. Few people come down into the streets.

Patchin Place in Greenwich Village

East Side Conversation Piece

An old man sits by a forest of sugar-cane, propped against the wall. Chinese written characters cover the walls, layer on layer of them, ladders of exquisite ciphers, like the imprints of birds' feet. The house-fronts are painted all colours—dark red, crimson and pale almond green. The sandwich-men carry posters lettered in emerald green and scarlet inks on pink paper, looking like samples of flowered cretonne. The sky glows a deeper blue above the coloured lights of the tea-roofs and the festooned oriental balconies. Electric signs advertise the Oriental Hotel, but more gently than in the harsh glare of Broadway. The shop-windows do not blaze as they do on Fifth Avenue; they twinkle with multi-coloured lights, shining down on rice and almond cakes, dried lichee nuts, back-scratchers, porcelain tablespoons, caddies of jasmine tea, bamboo flutes, paper kites like great fish and the three wise monkeys in soapstone. Yet everywhere the prices recall New York, marked in fractions of a dollar.

These magnificent displays are largely for the benefit of tourists. The Chinese kimonos are of the thinnest, shiniest, carnation-pink silk, gaud-ily embroidered in sequins; the handkerchiefs look like tissue paper.

Wing Woh Chong, among his burning joss-sticks, speaks no English, and firmly fails to understand should he be asked to fetch something not already on display. His stubborn placidity exasperates, and, impatiently, you buy the dusty bouquet of feather flowers from the counter, well aware that a fresh bouquet will appear the moment after your departure. Kung Lung's shop is a work of art. In the centre of the window stands a huge basket of artificial chrysanthemums, dahlias, roses and pansies in yellow and scarlet, yellow and orange, crimson and purple. Paper lanterns flank the basket. An ornate chandelier lights it from above; two borders of neon tube, one cerise, one night-blue, illuminate the sides. Gold Chinese hieroglyphs, re-calling designs of Picasso, are stamped on the window-panes. The woodwork of window and doors is bright orange, and the awning makes a border of emerald green.

Perforce, you linger to admire. You discover that Kung Lung's is a tea-shop and you go inside. Several impassive Chinamen, neat and orderly in Homburg hats and immaculate collars, are enjoying their "tea-lunch" with a certain pride. The tea is made in a flowered-pink china cup, over which a similar cup is upturned. While it is brewing, the boy brings from the immaculate kitchen (Board of Health surveys prove Chinese kitchens cleanest of all) the steaming array of delicacies. Onions stuffed with pork and vegetables, shrimp balls,

soft, steamed buns, steamed cake that is light as angel-cake, rice biscuits light as wafers. The boy's sleeves are rolled up to disclose arms like a woman's. The group sits slowly talking, and the sound as they converse is like quiet singing. Soon they disperse and a new group takes their place, while a fresh array of steaming delicacies is brought in. The tea-room proprietor collects the dimes for these elaborate meals with the dignity of a Chinese Emperor.

Children, their hair cut in crescent fringes, sit outside the Chinese Public School, waiting for the bell to ring. They wear a variety of clothing—some are in ski-suits, and one wears blatant checks with a Prince of Wales muffler worn like a stock.

You walk on. You read an invitation "to visit the Chinese Temple and to be amazed at the remarkable display of Oriental art, antiques and idols. Hundreds of thousands of men and women have given their unstinted praise." Chinese boys and girls will give full descriptions of the various objects, with an account of Chinese astrology thrown in. "Visit the Chinese Temple, one flight up"; but the little man has made a mistake; it is the wrong house. This is not the Temple. It is a long half-lit room filled with junk and shrouded furniture, dimly visible in a grey world, where mounds of bulbs, covered with pale sprouting roots, and old Chinese men with their slim, sprouting beards, appear in peculiar juxtaposition. As the eyes grow accustomed to the dim light, it can be seen that these old men are standing motionless, smoking, while time flies past them; and the door opens and shuts without disturbing their ancient dream. The picture remains only a few moments and then the door is shut, and you know they are still there behind it, staring into nothingness, and that you have glimpsed the reality of Chinatown.

The atmosphere in the Temple is quite different. The moment you cross the threshold you are received by the thin and irritating chatter of a woman's voice. "See this lovely old altar carved out of teak wood"—but the altar is a monstrous thing. "Come and stand over here, under this wedding awning, and you will be happy for seven years"—and you resent her smiling stupidity. "Before you leave, please to come over and sound this very wonderful old Chinese gong"—but the gong probably has a counterpart of equal quality and antiquity in half the private hotels of Brighton. Resentment increases as the woman insolently assumes that you are sufficiently gullible to find her chatter of interest, but in reality you cannot recall a more depressing experience than this dusty "Temple."


FOR SALE
LLOYD A. SMITH
51 CHAMBERS ST
WORTH 2-1900
ASSEMBLYMAN
FOR ASSEMBLYMAN
LEVINE
私生子
新中國戲院是日放映
大觀
JOSEPH LEVINE
ELECT JOSEPH LEVINE
ELECT JOSEPH LEVINE
ELECT JOSEPH LEVINE


COMPANY

MARIONETTE SHOW, *13TH STREET*

The war news on the posters in the street is not for tourists, however, nor are these signs on every shop door and window calling on the Chinese to "Stop Japanese Aggression." Curio hunters point indiscriminately round the shops at china and pottery figures, asking about each one: "Is that Confucius?" To them, the appeals for the relief of refugees in China mean nothing, and Chinatown is merely an Oriental sideshow in which these immobile men and women, reading the notices, are part of the amusement.

As if some stage hand had carelessly lowered the wrong backdrop, you see against the clear sky the incongruity of the Chrysler Building's modernistic spire, and it all becomes little more than a picture-postcard, with the colours impatiently overdone.

* * * * *

Nearly two million Hebrews, with their own theatres, restaurants, newspapers and synagogues, have made New York their home. The poor Jewish quarter is situated down on the East Side of the city. The first impression is one of unbroken poverty; the colour of the streets is melancholy in the extreme—dun-grey, slate-coloured, and with here and there a tuft of unexpected, lustreless yellow. What is it, this yellow? Hanging in the windows are fowls for sale, and fowls of a breed unknown elsewhere. Their long, attenuated shanks, their scraggy necks, their bony breasts, their Tiepolo beaks, have all taken on this curious hue after, perhaps, years in a communal refrigerator. These spidery, skinny, Kosher chickens were described by Paul Morand as having met a "haemorrhage death."

Neutral-coloured bedclothes and eiderdowns bulge through the windows of the upper storeys on their daily airing. In most cities, a quarter of such dreary poverty would contain a crushed and lifeless population, but here the impression given by the inhabitants is one of intense vitality. The crowded houses have overflowed into the streets, and the traders avoid the expense of rent by piling their merchandise on to pushcarts, heaping it on the doorsteps and hanging it upon their persons. A most animated bartering is carried on around these centres. Anything can be bought—bootlaces, pickles and expensive furs. Not only is there the immediate moral satisfaction gained by the completion of a bargain, but the clever dealer at these movable stalls has always the prospect of making a *coup* successful enough to enable him to move from these dark cellars to the Upper East Side, the Bronx, Washington Heights or even Fifth Avenue. In this market a beggar may start his

day with a button, swap it for a safety-pin, and, by clever trading, may have achieved an entire suit of clothes by nightfall. A bearded Rabbi appears, his greasy locks straying beneath his black, fez-like head-dress, and his long black robe isolating him from the market rabble. He passes the shop where suits are sponged and pressed for ten cents, and the house fronts camouflaged behind masses of old pots and cloth-ing exposed for sale; and he disappears into the store where Hebrew books are sold, its window-panes covered with Hebrew script. Small bonfires are built at regular intervals along the kerb, and odd pieces of clothing, wood and rubbish are added to the flare. Around these oases in the desert created by the biting winds, which seem to im-poverish everything they lash, the crowd becomes thicker, and the accumulated noises resemble the very screech of the East.

The Spanish section is to be found in the neighbourhood of 112th Street. The goods for sale are advertised in Spanish, or maybe one shop which sells "Aroz" proclaims it is open for "Bussiness." The three floors of the building which used to be the State Bank are now allocated to separate Spanish activities. On the ground floor is a Restaurant Bar where you can dine and dance. On the top floor is the Sporting Club or Workers' Alliance, and between the two is

squeezed Christianity in the form of the *Iglesia de Cristo*, its outside walls painted in stripes of pink, blue and black. The architecture of these old-fashioned houses is truly Spanish, with ornate fruit mouldings over the windows and an elaborate decoration of iron fire-escapes that run diagonally, like lightning, down the walls; with torn posters that enquire, "Que hace tu para posta?"—that proclaim, "Quidocion en

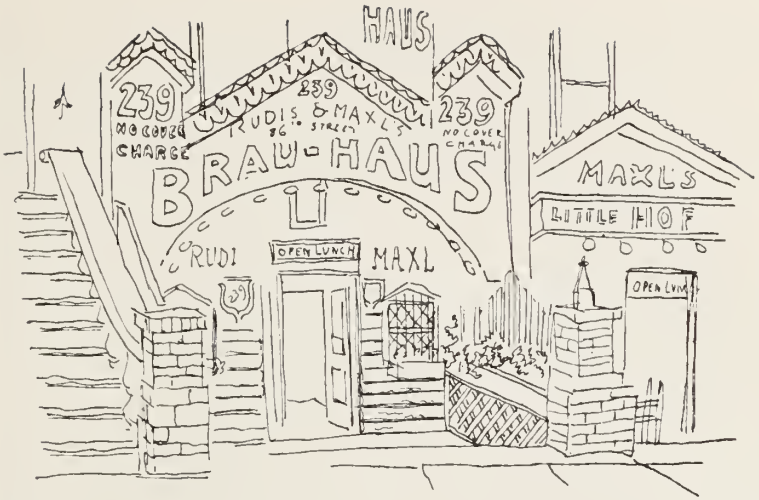
menestra." They sell masses of oranges, not from Seville but from California, and *leche* (Borden's) "Las Delicias" (including Spearmint and Coca Cola). But the origin of the coloured picture-postcards, poisonously tinted in puce, violet and emerald green, is Spanish. And the films at the cinema are old Spanish ones, with an incessant downpour indoors and no English sub-titles. To-day, they give "La Gran Cruz," and a floor show with flicked, frilled trains, woodpecker castanets and proffered armpits.

Hurrying up the street are two gypsy girls with matted hair and puce and magenta ballet skirts. The hordes of little Spanish children outside the *Abogardo* booth are baiting a Pomeranian, while its mistress, a fat señorita with plucked eyebrows and spitted kiss curls, sits on a kitchen chair in the doorway, apparently unmindful of the children, the dog and the north-easterly cold. The children have the universe as a playground. The street and the sidewalks are their day-nursery. The stone pavement can be elaborately marbleised with chalk, or decorated with prehistoric designs. The walls are there for patterning

with hearts of every different size and the advice that "Carmen Robinson loves Jack de Cubas." Infinite pleasure is found in camouflaging the bill-boards, in adding a moustache to Constance Bennett; but the gutter affords the greatest variety of all pleasures, with the quiet game of marbles in the mud or the impromptu burning of the contents of a dustbin. The air is filled with a pungent smoke, and crowds of black specks whirl in the sudden gusts of wind as the waifs create a blaze from the bonfire of wooden boxes on which matting and newspapers are piled. Some children prefer a spread fire, and run from one side of the road to the other igniting laths, old shirts and any rubbish that can be found. When the fire loses its magic, the hilarious sport remains of seeing the "last across" before the automobile passes. The louder the screech of the brakes, the greater the child's triumph. In the amusement park nearby the children swing in little wooden frames like bird-cages, and play soft ball; while the grown-up boys, in purple, rose and blue sweaters, play basket-ball by the hour with a sustained enthusiasm that resembles a calm. Their faces are enhanced and their limbs caught for ever in an exercise of perpetual motion. From the Observatory tower, on the summit of the mountain of lava-like rock above them, they bring to mind the familiar Brueghel figures of skaters in his pictures of winter.

* * * * *

Around 86th Street, the German quarter is known as Yorkville. The buildings are not tall, but they are essentially American. Yet, undaunted, the German landlords have ignored the three-floor façades and have built a row of excrescent bungalows, fancy tile-work shacks with oak doors and peasant windows that look out upon the sidewalk, and proclaim them as beer-halls, called "Café Mozart," or "Rudi and Maxl's Brauhaus." So Germanised is this quarter of New York, with the *Konditorei* shops, the *Deutsches Importhaus* and the Gloria Palast Cinema where *Der groesste Erfolg* is being played, that they advertise "Dialogue Titles in English." "Heute Abend," "Pfalzer," "Masken Ball," "Werzer Fest," "Viele Preise für Beste Masken," one reads written up. Through the windows come the sounds of pianos crashing and violins squeaking in three-four time, for a masked ball is taking place in the Yorkville Casino, which, as advertised, can be rented for "banquets, weddings, civic balls, mass meetings and beefsteaks." The shaven-headed neighbours and their *Frauen* do not go into the drug-stores for an ice-cream or a chocolate malted, but to the *caffé* for *Schokoladen* and



Spezialitäten, and the voices on the sidewalk are not enquiring "What's the difference?" but, in their father tongue, are weighing the pros and cons of Gerger's frankfurters *versus* the schnitzels in Schnager's "Summer Garten." Further towards First Avenue, the Hungarian section is recognisable only by the names on the shop-fronts: SMEJKOL, SOVAK, SAUZLIK, KLIPA. In the junk-shop nothing is considered unworthy of presentation or too mean to be exhibited in expectation of a sale. Next door the windows advertise, "Funeral complete with this Casket, one hundred and fifty dollars." The casket is upholstered in grey velvet. For two hundred and seventy-five dollars you can have a casket of white silk lined with quilted satin, but the last word in coffins is "the streamlined."

* * * * *

A surprising change of character can take place from one parallel street to another. The melancholy poverty of the Bowery is at once dispelled by the gaiety in the neighbouring street—part of New York's Italy. A *Commédia dell' Arte* harlequinade atmosphere prevails. The shop-fronts are *en fête*, garlanded with cheeses and sausages of every flavour and colour. Dried red peppers hang like bouquets of monster raisins; silver fish, sun-ray medallions, are pressed into circular boxes and placed on end; mounds of *finocchi*, a highly coloured cousin of celery, and a variety of other green vegetables, are stacked high; and barrels of floating pickles help to make shopping a spirited adventure.

High jinks centre around the coal wagon, stationed in front of Pizarro Apolitana, "the king of pies." Here coal is sold by the pail, and the old cart-horse with his load is festooned with strings of discarded ball-slippers that the local boys have, inexplicably, discovered somewhere. More of these slippers are lying around and others are hurtling through the air, thrown by the hilarious urchins, until the inevitable heel finds the inevitable eye, and the cart lurches on.

For some church fiesta, the streets are hung with scallops of lights, and impromptu bandstands, highly coloured in their paper decorations, are stanchioned on each side of the road, the rival orchestras vying *Traviata* successfully against *Veni, Veni, Veni.* The Catholic crowd throngs the streets, genuflecting and crossing itself before the shrines of flaxen-haired Madonnas and votive waxen limbs.

At the Teatro Garibaldi *Lucia* is being sung to-night, but inside the small barn theatre on 13th Street the benches are occupied by families who sit enchanted, watching, once again, the traditional performances of the marionettes. A grey-haired old woman in a woollen shawl black with fleas thumps a piano. In the wings on each side of the stage, an elderly couple scream the text of "Orlando Furioso" in shrill, cracked voices. Above the back-cloth painted in the 'eighties, stripped to the waist, in leather aprons and gloves, the three sons, tossing glistening curls and wiping sweat from their eyes, manipulate the huge clanking dolls with long iron rods. These dolls, of great weight in their gold and silver armour, tinsel embroidery and *panaches* of plumes, with brightly painted ciphers on their faces, hang backstage in rows, in order of their appearance. On the scene, they break into life. The Princess Rosalinda, in ivory satin with pink conches for sleeves, is in love with the beautiful Prince. After a fierce battle she is abducted by the wicked Alcazar. Her vanquished and unconscious lover is found by the young knight Reynaldo, and the two rescue Rosalinda, despite the dragons sent out by Alcazar. The old lady in fleas crashes out selections from *Traviata* while the stage scene resembles a panic in a barnyard, with swords brandishing, swinging and clashing, and plumes flying. After the unfortunate death of Reynaldo and the inevitable and gruesome end of Alcazar, the drop-curtain of painted palm trees, birds and flowers is rolled down upon the embracing lovers. Not only to the audience, but to their owners these dolls possess reality. The faces may have a fresh coat of paint and their embroideries be renewed, but the old dolls have, with time, become part of the family.

Once when I was photographing these marionettes, I asked if, for the sake of composition, Rosalinda could be placed lying on the floor, but the husky Italian wailed: "Poor Rosalinda she should not die. It would be wrong to have her lying on the floor." Just as these dolls have assumed reality, so, by custom, have the plots; and with what relish is the fatal blow delivered to Alcazar, with what joy and satisfaction are the lovers reunited!

* * * * *

Looking north from the green and gold cupola of the Grand Central Terminus, festooned lights scale over rising ground to 62nd Street, where Park Avenue ends in the sky. From this hill a second horizon is framed between the parallel silhouettes of distant houses. Here the white rainbow ends, for beyond lies Harlem, the coloured quarter, over-populated, shabby, ill-lit. From Morningside Heights another view of Harlem can be obtained. Here you see it from the neighbourhood of Columbia University, dominated by the personality of Doctor Nicholas Murray Butler; nearby the vast cathedral of St. John the Divine is still in the course of construction after half a century of building, while on the mountain-sides of Harlem Park are still a few squirrels, last survivals of an almost extinct race, the rest having been shot and their skins sold by the Harlem Negroes. Some of the grandest Fifth Avenue houses are only a few blocks away from the "Hot Bed Houses" called Home by coloured workers who rent the beds, let out in three eight-hour shifts throughout the twenty-four. Many Manhattan negroes do not live in Harlem, and though conspicuous, are to be seen in the streets of every part of the Island; but a white resident in Harlem is a rarity. It is a specialised district, a negro reservation in a white man's city. Harlem, a hundred years ago, was the Haarlem of Dutch settlers, and only since 1903 have the coloured people come here from their cotton-fields in the South. Still pouring in from the tobacco plantations, they have made this the most depressed, yet the gayest, section of New York.

The white man visits Harlem with a sense of adventure, as if he is violating something indefinable, like a workman entering to demolish an ancient church. Saturday night sees a greater, if unequal, interchange between Harlem and Downtown New York.

At the corner of Lenox Avenue and 144th Street, the heart of the "Black Belt," a negro constable signals a bus so crowded with black humanity that it resembles cooped hens going to market. The

lights change, and the black Western Union messenger saunters before the waiting traffic with the confidence only the red light can give. Passers-by display the latest in negro fashions. Individuality counts, and this flat-footed crowd, hurrying with springing, jerky walk, wears intricately cut and pleated jackets in colours chosen from a bold palette. The girl in checks, with spotted veil and gardenias, blue lips and a voice like a bell, is gaily feckless as she wheels a perambulator—"I didn't give my mother no special time I'd be home."

The glow of the Apollo Theatre's running lights dispels even the slate-grey fog. Red and blue, the lights advertise "Gangland's Racket Smash" and "Tarzan's Revenge." Stuffed lions and tigers in the lobby burlesque the jungle from which these people sprang, a race which only three generations before was still savage.

The fabulous Madame Walker is dead; Carl van Vechten's "Nigger Heaven" exists no longer. The large coloured night-clubs, to which the negroes were never welcomed, have moved downtown to Broadway. The financial depression ruined the smaller *boîtes*. Paris has claimed the torch singers, the Blackbirds have scattered and the waiters spin trays no more. Seven winters ago a different night-club was popular for every hour from midnight to sunrise; now only the Savoy Ballroom, where Harlem's negroes exercise themselves to the best coloured band, still retains its genuine gaiety. The negro taking entrance-tickets shouts: "Check your coats, brothers. All gents gotta check hats and coats." Downstairs the dandy in the cigar-leaf suit winks at the hat-check girl: "Hang it up next to a nice clean one, sister."

The ballroom ceiling is low. Under red and orange lights are hundreds of dancing negroes. Legs flail and twine, stamp and wriggle. Legs in purple, legs in checks, in evening black, in brown, in tweed skirts and evening gowns are wildly juggling, turning and twisting in rhythm to the facetious syncopation of dark hands. With childishly ecstatic faces, everyone looks happy, and everyone wears a look of proud vitality. Prosperous residents of Harlem, negroes who

CLINIC QUEUE

HARLEM

FINAL TOUCHES FOR WOOING

STREET FISHING

GUM THE BAIT

PENNIES THE CATCH

Harlem Photographer.

spend their lives doing menial tasks—houseboys, liftboys, variety artists, valets, cooks, parlourmaids, lavatory attendants—revel unhindered at the Savoy, letting off their individual steam.

Have you ever seen the last death-throe gyrations of a cat that has been run over? The frantic twitching of muscle and nerve are too unexpected, involved and rapid for one's eyes to follow. So it is with these Lindy Hoppers and Shaggists. One couple dances with such frenzy that a crowd gathers to watch the wild sickening tempo as they vibrate and rattle, tattooing the ground like some unnatural speeding-up of machinery—the boy, a macaroni in dress, his long, seemingly boneless limbs encased in grey check; the girl in canvas shoes, tweed skirt, jersey and beret. They are not lovers, but they love to dance together. He is the youngest of a family of eight, a grocer's messenger-boy on fifteen dollars a week. She is an assistant in an "Anti-kink Parlour," so they can afford to dance most evenings. Without crossing the floor they dance faster and faster, their arms waving, their hands flicking to a different rhythm from their pattering, rubber-soled shoes, legs like pistons stabbing in perfect mechanical co-ordination. White smiles are flashed as part of the dance, expressing no more than an abstract emotion. The crowd thickens, the abandon grows wilder still. Crescendo, and a new rhythm. The boy makes the girl a human boomerang as the crowd yells its pleasure and joins again in the jungle rites.

These people are children. Like children, they could hardly be expected to remember that on this day, many years ago, Abraham Lincoln was born. One does not expect a child to realise the origin of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, coloured eggs at Easter.

Outside the Savoy, a white youth with girlish hands, his face slashed, his eyes blood-filled, fumbles into a taxi. Perhaps negroes have beaten him up. Nobody knows or cares why. The fact that he is white was in this case probably irrelevant, but there have been serious race riots in Harlem, when black mob violence has made it unsafe for any white man to walk in the streets.

Northerners are indifferent to the negroes; here in New York there is little of the bitter hatred they have to endure in the South. Back on Park Avenue, the clubman's attitude to the "damn' niggers" is that he doesn't care so long as they don't come Downtown. "What the hell! They're O.K. in Harlem—they *like* it up there, anyway." To him they are "all right in their place,"

and by that he means they may dance jazz to people who are drinking, or serve drinks to people who are dancing. The negro is looked upon as a servant, a sort of "Brave New World" Epsilon type, who occasionally rapes a white girl and has to be punished.

"Of course," you hear some women chatter, "I *like* niggers. I know several and they're just as nice and *cosy*. . . ." "But," they add hastily, "of course they have to be kept in their place. Only people who've lived over here, naturally, can appreciate that."

Meanwhile, the negroes lead their own life in New York. The *Amsterdam News* ignores the New Deal and concentrates on everything of racial import. The headings announce: "No negroes used, blood donors are told"; "Sex charges against Divine Himself" (one of Father Divine's white angels, an outraged widow, has terminated her connection with his flock because the Father told her that, he being God, his intimacies would be "a blessing"); "Knifing follows heated quarrel—assailant escapes on trolley"; "Two torch lynchings spur mob to fight." Mr. Nelson Eddy is applauded for omitting the words "nigger" and "darkie" from his songs, and is quoted: "I am the first singer to cut the word 'nigger' out of 'De Glory Road.' I happen to know that the composer . . . regrets the inclusion of the objectionable word."

Many advertisements praise beauty-creams for bleaching the skin; one caption, accompanied by a photograph of a dark lady emerging from the trumpet of a lily, reads: "The lily is pretty because it is so fair. Use Black and White Bleaching Cream." The negroes have their own Walter Winchell in "Around Harlem with Archie Seal" ("The Leopold McFarlanes are expecting their fourth bundle from Heaven about the middle of June"), and the society columns are like any others ("A Gypsy Tea was given by the Polly Perts"—"The Royal Busy Bees gave an initial Tea to-day"). The social spotlight of the week is flashed on the executive ladies, and Mrs. Maria Fatchit was "surprised" on her birthday anniversary with a party planned by Stephen Pinks. Mrs. Fatchit was the recipient of many useful gifts, and among those present were: Mr. and Mrs. Sherrit Lattimore, Mr. and Mrs. Eustace Augustine, Miss Willie Mae Elmore, Miss Sadie Noisette, Mrs. Bernia Worthy, Mrs. Anzoria Hanna, Bubbles of the Dancing Team "Buck and Bubbles," Mr. Ben Beaubian and Mrs. Zenaide Jureidini.

* * * * *

A rich negro is host to fifty of his coloured friends in his penthouse. He gives parties because he enjoys it, because he has a reputation for

giving parties. He is determined that this will surpass them all. Imitation ivy climbs round the hot-pipes in the hall; vases of dyed pampas-grass decorate the drawing-room; the walls are of a dozen bright colours; an imitation marble mantelpiece has been brought in to frame an imitation fire—it rocks perilously if one leans against it. In meticulously placed chairs sit enormous black mammas, isolated in their jet and sequins.

As each new guest arrives, the host shouts introductions: "Folks, this is a great friend of mine, a very distinguished taxidermist. . . . And, ladies and gen'lemen, this is the brother of an Irish poet—we're gettin' to be a League of Nations round here." One of the black-sequined mommas, in the isolation of her armchair, is galvanised to life: "Hey, hey! Dat's true—it sho' is quite a League of Nations,"—and she subsides again, hey-heying quietly to herself.

In black satin, with a Duchess of Windsor coiffure, the hostess has no time for her friends as she busies herself tipping cigarette ash into a fancy biscuit-tin to the accompaniment of the usual sentimental ballads at the piano.

"Who is the man singing?"

"Oh, who knows? He's a professional."

The cocktail-bar in the kitchen is the focal point of activity. For hours these people, many of them more than a little drunk, have been standing about in formal groups, making polite and delicate conversation. A grave, quietly dressed negro who works in the City Administration and is an underground member of the American Communist Party, having eulogised Russia as he saw it, is asking detailed and intelligent questions about the British Communists. The pianist asks after Lord This and Lady That, expressing perfunctory regret over the death of Princess Murat. A rather lovely young girl from Haiti, drunk, has changed her defensive attitude to one of belligerence:

"I loathe this condescension. We are being served to you on a platter, to sing songs that imply mockery of our race."

Later she calms, speaking wisely of Christophe, proud of Haiti's record as the first independent negro republic. A curious snobbery exists between American and Haitian negroes. The Haitian is usually religious, speaking French and English, proud of his historical tradition and able to develop independently of whites.

"After all, Lincoln only died yesterday," says the Haitian with scorn, and the American counters by calling the Haitian a "tree climber."

To-night's Haitian explains that she is studying Rural Education and Marxism. An elderly negro interrupts to widen the discussion in terms of Pareto and Spengler.

"You Marxists are looking so far ahead—it amounts to defeatism, Utopianism. At least we must keep the qualities that are now in danger—at all costs, those of intellectual integrity," he says. "Communists have the right approach, in a way, but they stand to leave behind in the struggle what little humanism there is left."

At the piano, a serious little man begins to recite some embarrassingly mediocre verse in a tragic voice, with exaggerated gestures.

"Do you know the theory of aides?" the old negro asks.

The tree-climber is quoting *Das Kapital*. The elderly negro complains that the Webbs have betrayed everything. "*Everything!*"

Leaning against the bar, an octaroon girl kisses a man who has daisies embroidered on his collar and cuffs. A grotesquely large jaw and gangling limbs show that she has suffered sadly from mixed blood. Her sister, beautiful and almost white, highball in hand, dilates on the miseries of her lot.

"I dislike the blacks more than the whites," she declares. "They smile and pretend friendship, but behind my back they tell my boss I'm black, and I'm fired. And if whites get friendly, they find out some time. I wish to hell I was pure white."

"Why, it's gettin' to be more'n more like a League of Nations here. Hey, hey, hey!"

The hostess offers a plate of biscuits, minute pieces of salami and cheese poised precariously on each.

"We are the only people here who can talk about Pareto, eh?"

By dawn, the old negro is quite drunk. His recital of erudition goes on, becoming louder and more avid.

* * * * *

Despite the passing of better times, the negro homosexuals still appear at intervals dressed in a baffling impersonation of their opposite sex. Sometimes a "Drag" (or costume ball) is announced, and not until the last minute is the licence known not to be forthcoming, so that those arriving in travesty are turned away at the door to go home and change.

But each year the Mardi Gras Ball at the vast Rockland Palace is given under police protection, and thousands of female impersonators flaunt their sartorial preferences with little imagination, resorting to

HARLEM BRIDAL GROUP

Mr

& Mr

Oh promise me . . .

Weddings

DEATH IN HARLEM

tragic versions of contemporary fashions. These coloured people read their fashion magazines. They know all about Mrs. Reginald Fellowes and Lady Ashley-Douglas Fairbanks, but one wonders what they can be doing during the day, when they are not looking longingly at their heroines and heroes. What work can they do to earn a living? Who would employ the large sweating negro dressed as Colleen Moore in "Secrets"? The raised stubble of chin and neck is pitted with a powder that creates a blue bloom. The row of pearls accentuates, rather than camouflages, the adam's apple. Kid gloves cover the veined hands, but the feet are always a "give-away." The categories of impersonators can be divided into three separate types. The slick, fish-like torch singer, encased in a tube of black satin, with coloured chiffon handkerchief, but minus a wig: the colonial miss in hooped skirt, poke bonnet and moss roses, an alluring, old-fashioned baggage; and a type for which Gaby Deslys and Mistinguett can only be responsible, wearing jewelled brassières and codpieces whose scantiness is made up for by the vast erection of the feathered head-dresses. Many of these costumes have obviously cost a great deal of money, but how can these people afford the sums?

This nightmare pageant passes down the length of a raised platform in the centre of the vast hall. The limelights sear the skin of coloured copycats of Lady Mendl (distinguished in black tulle and pearls), Gloria Swanson and Mae West. But these figures with lowered lids, shrugging heads, bared teeth and capering walk are far more affected, artificial and self-conscious than any woman.

The police organise the procession—"Pass on there," as each beauty pauses in the limelight for his moment of triumph; while by the volume of applause they evoke the competitors are judged.

* * * * *

The Harlem photographer may be called on to take a picture of anything from a high-yellow fiancée to an intricate scalp operation. On the screens outside his shop are displayed grandiose wedding-groups—the black bride in tulle frills, proudly flanked by her faultlessly dressed groom and countless bridesmaids. Inside you see further proof of his craft. With a passivity foreign to New York, he shows an extraordinary collection of photographs taken in the ordinary course of his work. In Harlem he is called upon to capture the tragedy as well as the happiness in life, turning his camera on death or marriage with the same detachment.

"Apotheosis" pictures are his speciality. He shows one which is his particular pride—the corpse lies in a casket lined with quilted satin, surrounded by wreaths of hired, waxen flowers. Into the picture he has incorporated sentimental views of the victim taken at various times in life. He superimposes bars of hymns, lines of sentimental poetry, doves, and "faded in" reproductions of religious oleographs of the Saviour, arms outstretched in welcome. Buddha-like, he hands out samples of his art.

"This was a penumonia kid"; his descriptions are incisive. A microscopic black baby lies on a silken bed beside a huge white chrysanthemum. "This woman was poisoned by her girl friend." For years they had lived together, he tells us, then she got married and they all three lived together. The bride never felt well, and she died when her baby was born, killed by a slow poison that only became fatal at conception. You see the dead woman in a bower of bouquets; the solemn widower, in formal morning coat, stands by the lid of the coffin. Another man was run over by a tram. The exact cause of death in yet another case was forgotten, but the funeral had been "wonderful," with "fifty cars."

He shows us proudly proofs which have been retouched, explaining that, for the family's sake in certain cases, retouching is necessary. The young man who had been killed in a street accident had certainly needed beautifying, but the retouching had failed to erase the frown suggestive of a sleeper troubled by unpleasant dreams.

Negroes revel in litigation, and an important part of the photographer's work is to supply documentary evidence to support claims for compensation. "This was a ceiling that fell down." The victim, head swathed in bandages, lies beneath a hole in the ceiling of a shabby bedroom, surrounded by fallen plaster. A photograph of a naked negress lying on her back, a laced seam running the length of her torso, is evidence to be used in a claim for damages for an operation performed without her consent. Another nude, a human pebble-dash wall, claims against the patent-medicine firm believed to have caused the outbreak. To the photographer this collection is not without its humour—a photograph of a carton of cooked ham and eggs shows the head of a cockroach leering from it. More grim relics follow, including autopsy pictures in which the bodies look no more human than the charts and diagrams in medical text-books. Here a scalp is cut off and turned back from the brain, and, in another exposure, turned forward on to the face, to look like some ghastly beard joke.


Camels
CHOICER TOBACCOS
Camels
SET YOU RIGHT!
Camels set you right!
EX-LAX
EX-LAX

PICCANINNY

VI

THEORY OF THE PLEASURE CLASS

You shall perceive . . .
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze,
By the sweet power of musick:

The man that hath no musick in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted.

In winter, there is almost too much good music. Even the vast audiences of music lovers cannot hear a tenth of what is provided. The concert halls are plastered with the announcements of concerts and recitals; Sunday papers herald a phenomenal list of musical activity. Each big boat brings in a further load of conductors, pianists, 'cellists, violinists, flautists and singers. The grey-haired ladies carry on highly technical discussions about various conductors. The symphony concerts are of the highest quality in the world, and Toscanini has far more fame than any cinema star, more power than most politicians, possibly more influence than any other visitor.

It is curious that New York, so proud of its musical achievements, should have no hall or theatre worthy of them or of so great a city. Carnegie Hall reminds one of the recreation-room at a Spa Hotel, and a small town in Italy produces a more opulent opera-house than the Metropolitan, an antiquated store-house or prison without a façade. Here the highest-paid singers sing their hearts out, and throughout the season the house is packed; yet the operatic productions are excessively dull, and it is often impossible not to believe that one has been transplanted back fifty years, while the somnambulistic conductor seems forgotten by the elephantine singers wearing wigs and draperies saved from Patti's day.

When the Metropolitan Opera Company was founded in the 'eighties, certain wealthy people took shares in it in the form of boxes for the season, in the same way that real estate is owned; and these investments have now become the means whereby the great families can enjoy music for its own sake. Some of these boxes have passed from grandfather to grandson, and may be sub-let or sold as desired; but on the door of each is a brass plate still bearing the name of the original holder, or part holder. The programme still records among its list of box holders:

27—Mrs. John T. Pratt
Estate of F. Fulton Cutting
10—Estate of George F. Baker
Mrs. John Hubbard
20—Estate of Ogden L. Mills
Estate of Elisabeth Mills Reid

Mr. J. P. Morgan has a box in the centre of the golden horseshoe, and Mrs. Vanderbilt above the stage on the left. There is a great deal of etiquette about the "placement" in the box, and the owner must sit in the front row, at the farthest point from the stage. Unfortunately, some of the boxes remain unused for much of the season, for their owners have not taken the trouble to go to the Opera, to place them at the disposal of their friends, or to sub-let them.

Not so, however, on the first night of the season, for the Opening Night of the Opera Season is more than the opening night of the opera season. For weeks before the event the interest has been intense about who is going to the Metropolitan and with whom.

Monday arrives, and the cars of the opera-goers create an impassable phalanx extending for many blocks around the Metropolitan. Throughout the season, of course, the opera is crowded, but to-night produces in addition the social-army cataclysm in its annual mass attack upon Music. Warlike conditions prevail in the lobby, where the "Four Thousand" is fighting its way through a mob of journalists and photographers who seem to have an exaggerated idea of the number of pictures needed. *Tristan* has begun when the auditorium is reached, but that is a minor consideration. The real interest lies in watching the boxes in the golden horseshoe filling, one by one. Isolde and her waiting-maid are singing their very hearts out, but eyes turn to Mrs. Astor—erect, bottle-shouldered, elegant of neck—as she sits upright in her box, as yet the only one tenanted. Tristan and Isolde are already

taking the love potion when Mrs. Vanderbilt arrives, all white and silver as if in a cocoon of that spun-sugar around an ice-cream.

It is only when the lights go up for the first interval that the Opera Season really begins.

A pathological restlessness pervades the house. Everyone is searching for someone else. The café lounge is thick with smoke, and the harassed faces are continuously lit by the flash of photographers' bulbs. Groups of old ladies seem to have been carefully preserved for this occasion, apparently their first appearance since posing for Toulouse-Lautrec. One never encounters these old ladies elsewhere—relics in mustard wigs, marmalade wigs, chutney wigs that cover a web of skin-stitches over the temples. They are dressed in the palest Neapolitan and *pistachio* ice-cream colours, with orchids tied with tinsel ribbon in the white-fox collars of their ermine capes, and cords of pearls bandaging the drainpipes of their old chickens' necks. For days the assistants at the beauty salons must have been massaging, enamelling and painting overtime, and the coiffeurs dyeing and tonging the heads of these Jezebels, so that now the innumerable tight waves would defy any comb. This year, as in the 'nineties, these same old ladies wear aigrettes. A hawk-like couple moves about in the crowd, black birds of paradise sprouting above them. Another dear old ghoul wears rainbow-shaded ospreys in hair like coconut-matting; a highball in front of her, she repairs her skin from a powder-box.

The borderline of insanity is always elusive, but it seems dangerously near to us at this moment.

Although New York has a hire service for "escorts"—a reputable man for five or ten dollars an evening—these born widows are for the most part unattended. They seem content to play with vanity cases, like witches hungrily bending over their cauldrons.

Below, in the vestibule, a more certifiable madness can be seen. An old lady, once an actress on Broadway, has got herself up in ghastly glad rags, remains of some ancient theatrical wardrobe, yet little worse than those in the assembly above. Nowadays she is not quite sound in the head, and she remonstrates loudly with the doorman who refuses her admittance. She has no ticket, no money, so she cannot pass. She stays, gesticulating in a pantomime of protest, in her yellowing ermine and cracked kid gloves, coal-black eyes glaring from beneath her frizzed hair. "I'll report you to the manager. Do you know who you are talking to?" "Show me yer ticket," he says. And then, "You're cracked."

She is still there, peering through the glass doors like a ruffled bird, as the assembly returns, but the stragglers titter as she gathers her frayed train and foots it to the sanctuary of her bed-sitting-room.

The curtain has long gone up on the second act. The photographers' bulbs that were silver Christmas tree decorations have turned to balls of cloudy glass, lying stacked in corners.

Isolde adds to a series of Chopin themes, reiterated with monotonous lack of composition, a primitive imitation of a cow on heat. The conductor directs these natural noises as much with facial gestures as baton. The orchestra, in their illuminated ship, are oblivious of the lovers in the garden; the trombone player awaits Tristan's wounding in the duel before noisily tipping the water out of his instrument.

Restlessness persists. During the performance people come and go like the audience at some continuous film-show. Many who have paid prohibitive prices for the privilege of hearing the first night of *Tristan* are propped against the bar discussing the brilliance of the opening during the Liebestod.

The snores of an old man and the asthmatic moth flutters of the ciné-kodaks compete with the clicking of the Leicas of enthusiastic "candid-cameramen," as Isolde fights a desperately losing battle.

The lights go up again and the gallery applauds the insignificant figures who take their bow.

Next morning the headlines acclaim the opening as "the most

glamorous in years." "Dame Fashion" has observed, and now comments on fresh foibles of the celebrities in the golden horseshoe. The *Times* and the *Tribune* carry front-page stories. Cholly Knickerbocker follows two full pages of chatter in the *Evening American* with a radio description of the most glittering occasion in the history of the Metropolitan.

* * * * *

In New York, the art of entertainment has been raised to the height of a great national activity. The Theatre is part of contemporary existence, and is more alive than in any other capital to-day. Stars from all over the world come to make this scintillating constellation brighter.

The New Yorker does not take the cinema seriously. Going to a movie for him is much like taking a lucky dip; one film may be as dreary as another. In England, the movies are treated as "Art," and have sadly damaged the Theatre. On the legitimate stage in London there are no more long runs. In New York a play can still draw after four years, and the list of attractions is enormous, for the New Yorker goes to the theatre more often than the Londoner, and, as in France, a play that offers fantasy and poetry will be appreciated even if the fare is slight. The theatre houses are, however, without exception, ugly and dark, and the curtain is never raised promptly at the advertised time; but the programme is free.

In London, the dramatic critics live in a world apart. Their opinions, as remote as they are dry, are unheeded except by those directly concerned with the theatre. New York critics are a vital factor in current tendencies, and from their reviews one knows what sort of entertainment to expect. In London one asks the opinion of a friend about a certain play; in New York one reads Mr. Brooks Atkinson or Mr. John Mason Brown.

New York audiences are critical and alert, with a highly developed sense of the ridiculous. Only the best succeeds, and few examples of the first-rate escape them. They are ruthless; old favourites are discarded as soon as they fail to please. The entire audience stands to acclaim Toscanini, who has become a god; but even he cannot rest on his laurels. Some time ago, he had to abandon his season and leave for Europe to recuperate from an illness. He promised, however, to conduct one final concert to be given for charity. His return to the podium was the signal for ten minutes' hysterical ovation; but the

performance of a Brückner symphony which followed was not to the liking of the audience, and the final applause was perfunctory. Under the same conditions in London, Paris, Vienna or Milan, he could have done no wrong and the applause would have been unconditional.

New York audiences not only dislike, but will not accept, anything hackneyed. London managers, knowing how much the audience dislikes anything it has not seen before, consider one success as a pattern for all future offerings. New York audiences did not consider the virtuoso performances of Edith Evans and Elizabeth Bergner an adequate excuse for the old-fashioned, manufactured situations in which they were framed. Neither does one success lead to another. In the season when Steinbeck's "Mice and Men" was the outstanding hit, the same author's "Tortilla Flat" ran for less than a week.

That Shakespearean English has such affinity with the New York slang of to-day (obscure plays like "Epicene, or the Silent Woman" are full of wisecracks) is perhaps the reason for the prevalent taste for the Elizabethans; the audience, on hearing Cleopatra talk of her salad days, love to nudge and whisper, "Say, but that might have been written to-day!"

The most unadventurous commercial propositions are put over the footlights with a realism and vitality that leave the English stage way behind in the days of Sir Arthur Pinero. Many of the small Art and Experimental theatres have grown to influence the World Theatre. To the names of the most important stage organisations, the Theatre Guild, the Group Theatre, the Provincetown Playhouse and the Civic Repertory Theatre, must now be added that of the Mercury Theatre. Evolved only two or three years ago by two young men, John Houseman, aged thirty-five, and Orson Welles, aged twenty-two, the Mercury Theatre has created productions of the most imaginative beauty. With applause ringing in their ears, and their pockets filled, to these two we now look for live productions of the most beautiful plays that have been written, as well as for encouragement to undiscovered writers.

Orson Welles, with the face of a giant, the voice of Orpheus and the virtuosity of an infant prodigy, is the genius of the New York stage to-day. His theatre sense is as robust as his taste is impeccable. His knowledge is such that he can afford to treat lightly the things he most reveres. His vitality impregnates everything and everyone with whom he comes in contact, and his imagination is like Niagara. That there

is someone who refuses to allow success and Hollywood to pervert his ideas and ideals is the healthiest symptom of the Theatre to-day.

In all New York the tempo is quick. In the theatre it is breathless. The actors have a natural wit, and begin their careers early without the hindrance of a dramatic school training, accompanied as it is by a clipped accent, exaggerated vowel sounds and other essays in gentility. These actors are not, as in London, trying to be, above all, gentlemen and ladies.

Americans, when they visit London, realise the sad state of the West End theatre, with over-sensitive censor and warhorse stars battling in the french-windowed drawing-rooms to infuse life into their audiences by means of pointing index fingers, flipped handkerchiefs, winks and grimaces. Yet New York, always hospitable to foreign stars since the days of Bernhardt, Réjane and Duse, now welcomes English stars as first favourites, and John Gielgud, Maurice Evans, Leslie Howard, Gertrude Lawrence and Noel Coward are continually arriving on the *Aquitania* or the *Queen Mary*.

The best and wittiest of contemporary writers and light composers are producing musical comedies in New York to-day. Cole Porter, Lorentz Hart, Richard Rodgers, Ira Gershwin, John Mercer, Howard Dietz, Moss Hart, Jerome Kern and Irving Berlin are making America's contribution to the entertainment of the world. "On Your Toes" and "I Married an Angel" are topical successes of which any country should be proud. But irony is not appreciated, and slapstick is scorned.

Outstanding stage memories of the last few years for me have been: Mr. Mei Lang Fang, the Chinese female impersonator and the greatest stage personality I have ever seen; Miss Julie Haydon's crystal performance in "Shadow and Substance"; and the bull-like, bird-like Spanish dancer, Esqudero. Mr. Ray Bolger is not a Broadway comic so much as a true and serious artist. Beatrice Lillie becomes ever more sure of her subtle effects. Moments with Miss Judith Anderson and Mr. Stephen Haggard in the lovely play of the reincarnation of the poet Chatterton, "Come of Age," will always linger in my memory, as will also the sentimental reunion of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne in the Old Vienna of Robert Sherwood's play. Fred Astaire in "Night and Day" was unforgettable, and "Four Saints in Three Acts" of a memorable gaiety.

Of the actresses, Miss Lynn Fontanne is the greatest technician. Even after months of rehearsal, she treats the opening night as an

opportunity for the further polishing of her performance. With expanded chest, proud head and proffered profile, she enters the stage, defying anyone not to admit that she is a beauty; yet only by acquiring the behaviour of a beauty has she become one. Miss Ina Claire, brilliant even without a suitable vehicle, is the wittiest and quickest actress. Famous for sharp and superficial brilliance, she has recently developed an appeal that is very sympathetic. Miss Lilian Gish, by dint of unflagging perseverance and determination, has acquired a range, as a stage actress, of such power that, by contrast, the brilliance of her screen career is diminished. With the presence of a saint, she is one of the great histrionic artists of her day. Miss Helen Hayes adds brilliance of technique to her natural instinct for acting, and it is a joy to watch the audience reacting in just the very way that Miss Ruth Gordon wishes. Miss Katherine Cornell has the essential quality of great actresses in dominating the stage, even when sitting in a corner of it, but I find her giant reputation overrated. In whatever role she appears, she seems always the same poised schoolmistress with mongolian ancestry and ever moistened lips. Of the actors George M. Cohan, now aged sixty, with a career as author, director, actor, dancer and composer, is the most loved figure on the New York stage; and the newcomer, Hiram Sherman, gives promise of being its most appealing comic.

Names most likely to be remembered in connection with the American stage of to-day, as authors, directors or play-doctors, are Eugene O'Neill, Dreiser, Sheldon, Jed Harris and Clifford Odets. Often when a play has failed "on the road," the services of Mr. George Kaufman are wired for and his readjustments of cutting, re-writing and re-direction generally bring forth golden adulation. Mr. Kaufman has a unique position in the Theatre; with an uncanny sense of the public pulse, he works with collaborators to set the tone. His brilliance is superficial and unpretentious, and he is likely to have a hand, and a percentage of the profits, in half the current successes. With Mr. Kaufman working much of the year in Hollywood, Mr. George Abbott is the next favourite "play-doctor," but he never seems able to employ his talents in connection with any finer theme than Boy meets Girl.

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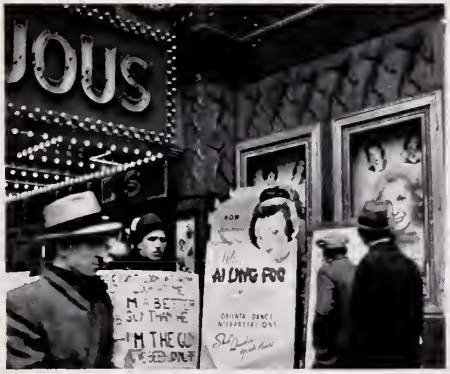
The Picture Palaces are no credit to New York. The ornate gilding, running fountains, "Old Masters" and Tiepoloesque ceilings no longer impress as opulent. In most cases the architect's aim has

BROADWAY ATTRACTIONS



RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

been to create a building to disguise its real function. From an Italian vineyard of illuminated grapes, from a rococo terrace under a starry Venetian sky, from a dimly lit loggia filled with artificial flowers and marble statues, we sit watching "Mr." Paul Muni escaping from a chain gang, or Bette Davis going off to catch a disease. Outside, under the portico of massed electric bulbs, the elephantine coloured photographs seem to have stayed still these twenty years.

By their chromium-modernesque façades and block Neon lettering, the Translux Cinemas are easily distinguishable. Inside, the extreme brilliance of the projector, placed behind instead of before the screen, creates a glow so bright that one can easily find one's seat, read a newspaper or, for an hour, watch the programme of standard reels of news, cartoons, actualities and titbits for the price of a shilling. Designed with a simplicity all the more commendable and striking in contrast to the over-decoration of the usual cinema, Radio City Music Hall achieves at once size and beauty. Lighting from slats in the endless perspective of golden arches provides the decoration. Through these Venetian blinds, rainbows of blue-green appear. We sit in a blue-green world, conscious of the vastness of the purple curtain which changes to blazing vermilion as we watch. The proscenium arch is so high that the curtain seems to unfold itself in slow motion. We watch as if from an aeroplane, remote, quite unattached and with no affinity with the dwarfed beings so far away on the stage. Simultaneously, the rainbows change to crimson, steeping us in the rosy glow of the photographic dark-room. The far distant conductor seems Mephistophelian in his fiery Inferno, as he and his hundred musicians sink before our eyes to the regions below. Again the lights change, and the midget juggler runs upon the scene, his dinner jacket grey in such brilliance, his shirt-front as white as the Northern Star.

The Stage Show, changed weekly, is one of the best popular entertainments in New York, where the poor man can enjoy himself as much as the millionaire. The musical numbers and ballets by the "Rockettes" are nearly always of a higher grade of imagination than the lavish paucity of the Hollywood films that follow. The Rockettes, fifty amazingly trained dancers, the coloured lights turning them into luminous Japanese lanterns, dance with a precision that would

delight a Prussian general, the *dénouement* of their routine being a high-kicking goose-step that automatically produces thunderous volumes of applause. Looked at from a distance, they seem like an animated comb or a centipede sensible to rhythm.

* * * *

Swing Music is such a comprehensive subject and covers so wide a field that a full knowledge of it warrants a university degree. I have never been with the "jitterbugs," or to a "jam session," or to the Yankee Stadium, where the swing sessions, starting at eleven in the morning, reduce, by tea-time, the audience to a jelly; but in night clubs anyone can see the amateur devotees of jazz music in mystical raptures. A bad band does not exist in New York. As in California, no one says, "Nice sunny day to-day," in New York no one remarks that the band is good, or that the man who sings the vocal refrain has a voice to warrant stardom on the European musical-comedy stage. Even the hotels which have no pretensions to smartness have wonderful bands, and Benny Goodman played at the Pennsylvania. Most of the big ones have their own night clubs, too, with cabaret turns augmenting the expensive orchestras. *Diseuses*, those wretched women with no voices, closed eyes and love-jags, are met with much sympathy, but ballroom dancers have to be exceptional to command attention.

The debutantes dance at the Stork Club; Emile Coleman winks at the dancers-by as he plays at the Iridium Room at the St. Regis; at the Onyx, Maxine Sullivan sings folk-songs in the dark with a childish freshness and the clearness and purity of dripping water. At La Conga the atmosphere and the band are Cuban, and the Cuban band at El Morocco alternates only too often with Ernie Holtz's. If you can stand the nervous strain, Joe Marsala's band swings thunderously in the centre of the oval bar at the Hickory House, in a room like a large bleak cafeteria.

The orchestras of New York are like bacteria, splitting up, joining and again separating. Eddie Duchin, the best jazz pianist, used to be with Leo Reisman's Symphonic Band. Since three or four years his band has become the most popular for "corny" music (swing jargon for old-fashioned). Miss Billie Holliday's plaintive urchin's voice used to be heard with Teddy Wilson's Orchestra, but now she has her own. So, too, has Drummer Krupa and Fats Waller, the pianist who plays

like a mechanical piano in a public house—"a mechanical piano with a sweetness all its own."

Of the chief orchestras, Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey are the swing exponents, Jimmy Dorsey and Bunny Berigan specialise in hot swing, while Sammy Kaye and Guy Lombardo are "sweet," and could play a eunuch's serenade. Duke Ellington, whose early gramophone records are now worth their weight in gold, has made jazz highbrow. Louis Armstrong, with the "aftermath voice," specialises in the hot trumpet hold-out, and Cab Calloway is the hi-de-ho man. In the Make-believe Ballroom—the largest ballroom in the world—swing gramophone records are played over the air every evening at six o'clock, and Chick Webb runs favourite with Red Norvo. If Diaghileff were alive, he would doubtless commission the Raymond Scott Quintette to do a ballet for him. "The Happy Farmer" is one of the real musical innovations of to-day.

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The International Casino, where the fare is of the Folies Bergère variety, with blaring bands, ground-glass illuminated escalators and tables laid out for business-men's conventions, is like a circus of girls. Girls coming downstairs, walking in crocodile formation; rows of blonde somnambulists posing, one knee shielding the other, in jewelled *brassières* and *cache-sexes*. At closer quarters the attendant girls selling comic toys, souvenirs or cigarettes adopt a protective attitude at variance with their appearance. At the Casa Mañana, Miss Sally Rand, with the aid of a fan, all but reveals her *cache-sexe*. More girls at the Hollywood, more and more girls at the Paradise, but the paradisiacal atmosphere is flavoured by the general partiality for welsh rarebit. At the Cotton Club the noise is deafening. Copper-coloured girls emulate the frenzies of the jungle, wheeling and tap-tapping with negroes in white satin coat-tails, sequin lapels, white top-hats and tennis-shoes. At Jack Dempsey's night spot the usherettes wear pink hunting-coats. On 52nd Street, the most popular places are without a band. At the crowded Twenty-one West 52nd, every sort of person sits on red leather banquettes in the rustic atmosphere of oak panelling shouting at one another or into the telephones plugged in at each table. Formerly a speakeasy, the success of this place is undiminished by the repeal of Prohibition. Now, Jack and Charlie proudly conduct favoured visitors to the cellars, a maze of carefully camouflaged doors and secret

walls opened by electricity, a complicated and forbidden underworld formerly known only to three people. As in medieval days, when an architect or engineer was despatched on the completion of his secret designs, so these engineers and their accomplices, their work complete, were sent abroad with their hidden knowledge for two years.

For those who cannot face their beds, Reubens' (open all night) is the final port of call. "From a Sandwich to an Institution," Reubens' has its own hierarchy, and to have a sandwich named after one is considered a high honour in the world of Broadway. Instead of asking for a cheese or tomato sandwich, you can demand a "Colonel Jay C. Flippen," a "Ben Bernie," a "Doctor Leo Michel," a "Vincent Lopez," an "Ed Sullivan" or a "Sig Hindlemann." From more than sixty special sandwiches, perhaps you would like "Grace Moore's Reducing" —Turkey, cole slaw, whole-wheat toast and no butter—a "Louis Sobol"—cream cheese, Bar-le-Duc and chopped pecans—or a "Walter Winchell"—roast beef, Swiss cheese and sliced dill pickle.

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Madison Square Garden, originally started by Mr. Barnum, now attracts two million persons a year for boxing, hockey, bicycle-riding, circus, wrestling, rodeo, horse, dog, cat, poultry and police shows: tennis or basket-ball matches, religious revivals, Paderewski concerts, winter sports exhibitions, and ice follies.

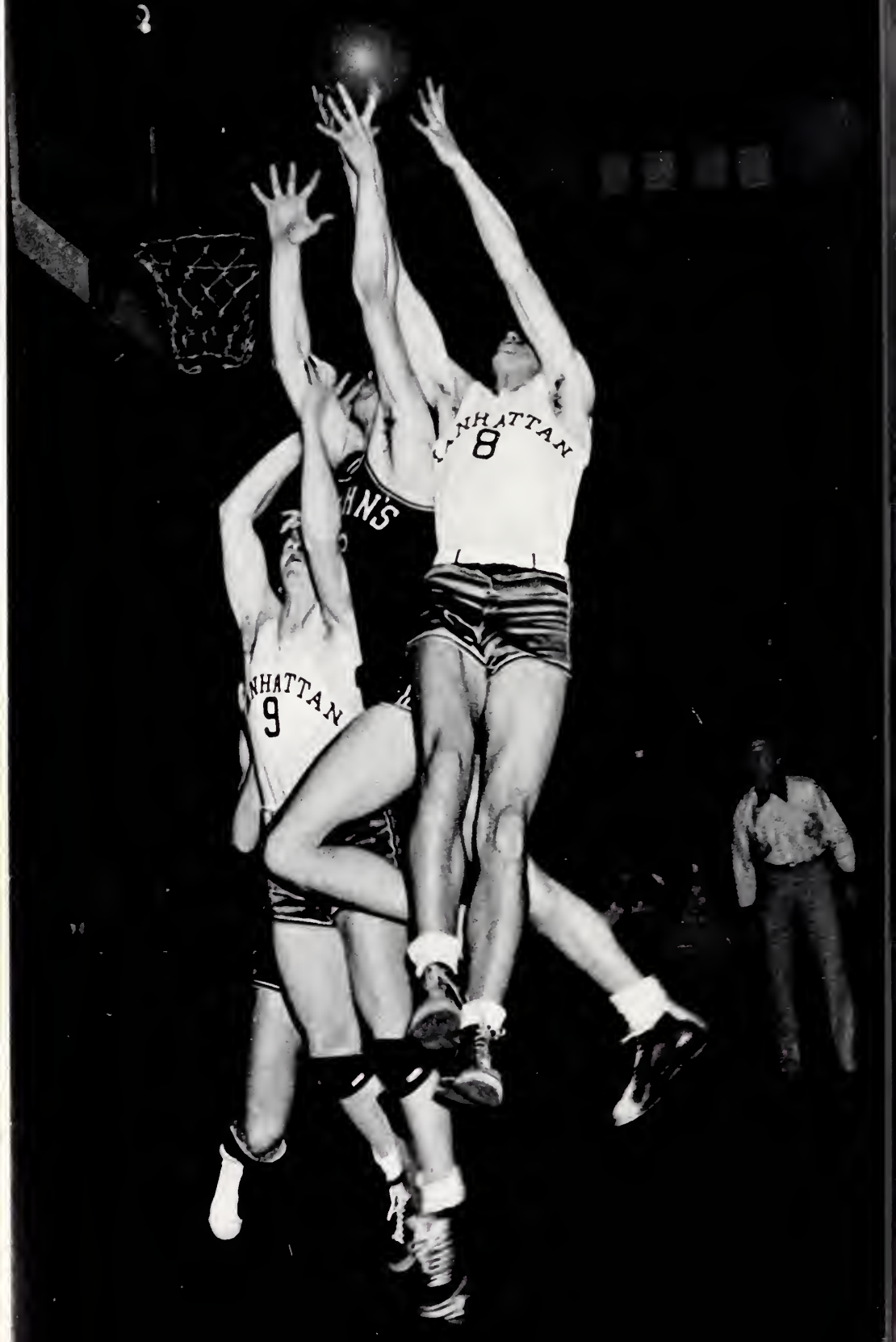
Although the terrible days of dance marathons, "gabfests" and pole-sitting belong now to the era of Texas Guinan, Mayor Jimmy Walker and Aimée Semple McPherson's Hot Gospellers, the six-day bicycle races continue. Madison Square Garden belongs to the nineteenth century, a subject for an early Bellows painting.

The cyclists in their stripes pedal round and round, bent double like clockwork monkeys. In tiny tents beside the ring they live for six days, the curtains being drawn briefly for massage or a short sleep, more in the interests of decency than to allow privacy. A team of organised helpers, like ants, are constantly busy with towels, embrocation, wash-basins, enamel pots and food. They urge to victory their weakening wards, who for days on end see nothing but the stream of grey asphalt rushing towards them.

At dawn, when nerves are almost at breaking point and speeds are flagging, a tough blonde arrives with her beaux, waving a

"TO-NITE AT EIGHT"

Flesh Show


NHATTAN
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NHATTAN
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hundred-dollar bill in a macabre attempt to get a thrill by watching galvanised corpses put on an extra spurt.

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In Paris, night clubs are the first to suffer at a time of economic crisis; they suffer last in New York, where everyone lives on credit, spending capital. The eve of ruin is as suitable an occasion as any other to go out for a "good time," be it to "get stinking," hear Flagstad, watch Sonja Henie or see Hannes Schneider and his pupils ski-ing down a snow-slope built for the nonce in the heart of Broadway. Even during financial depression, the Manhattan Opera House and Madison Square Garden are crowded.

At a comparatively small stadium where, to-night, another programme of wrestling is advertised, three thousand enthusiasts are attracted into the smoky, foggy atmosphere around the brilliantly lit arena. Women, with their husbands or in twos and threes, take off moth-balled fur coats and fold their hands preparatory to the enjoyment of a cosy evening. The men are eager-eyed, chewing with restless energy.

Wrestling is the fourth biggest industry in the country and, although this is not an important night, the crowd reacts with its customary hysteria. The preliminary fights are treated as a "till ready" for the major operations. The audience is not yet particularly interested in what happens to which opponent. Celebrities in the ringside seats are pointed out—the Russian Jew who owns the hall, with long hair, silver-topped cane and gardenia in buttonhole. The referee, now a dentist in Nyack, was a wrestler himself once. So, obviously, was the man next to him, with his face battered flat as a rock. There are many babies and small children, for the Greeks bring their babies and children with them, and the main bout of the evening stars the "Greek Adonis."

The referee sounds his bell, a flat bell that hurts the temples. The preliminary antagonists bait one another, now getting into a clinch, unable to get out of it until one makes a mistake, such a mistake that defeat would surely be preferable to such humiliation. The crowd, high at the back, begins to whistle, to make isolated calls. "Attaboy Jim, twist it"—"it" meaning the head of the man who made the mistake. Someone boos.

"It's brutal to match men like that," one hears in an aside.

"No, not brutal, funny."

But the fight does not stir the crowd. "Throw the bum out." . . . "Which one do you mean?" Sarcasm is barbed, ribaldry cruel, and the epithets almost poetical. The referee's tin bell clangs; the fight, amidst general boos, is declared a draw.

Two more victims appear, blinking under the strong lights. Again the flat bell, and another slow slaughter begins. They duck, crouch, duck again. Heads down, arms outstretched, they cling to one another, ramming with their heads, like bulls.

Just a minor discomfort in this sport is the frequent pushing against, or dragging along, the ropes, burning into the wrestlers' naked flesh, leaving ugly weals.

One of the bulls had in some other bout been badly burned and scarred. For to-night's rites it has been thought wise to fix a small bandage to the worst wound, on the ribs. Once seen, the rectangle of plaster cannot be ignored, must be followed through the intricacies of the fight. A twist has dragged one of the sticking tapes out of place, a throw against the ropes has loosened another strip. By horrifying, slow degrees, the pad of liniment and cotton wool is torn away, to fall stickily into the ring.

Inevitably, the dislodged bandage is stepped on, the adhesive tape sticks to the ball of the foot, difficult to remove as flypaper. Not until the scissor hold, when it finds a new home on the thigh of the underdog, at the ring of the flat bell and the booing of the mob, is the fight of the bandage over.

To keep the crowd's sympathy, a wrestler should not appeal to the referee, even against unfair treatment. To wrench a smile, to tickle the opponent successfully, will create a good impression. Pulling the hair is about the only indignity not encouraged. Many wrestlers, however, ignore the reactions of the crowd, remaining impervious to its shouts of encouragement, hostility or derision.

The bouts continue, and those in the crowd compete in witticisms. The man in the brown suit, smoking a cigar, is the knowing type: "Look, he's on the soft part of the biceps, just like he wanted." Stark agony is registered on the wrestler's face, like an early Christian martyr's ecstasy. Why does he do it, if he hates it so? "Look at that face now!" . . . "He's got leverage now, he's getting busy." . . . Some children shout: "Bite his leg!" . . . "There's a picture!" . . . "Break it off!" . . . "Wake me when it's over!"

Someone whistles, blows a series of catcalls. Somewhere a bell rings as if for vespers, a siren shrills, and another match is over. The Spanish Bull victorious over the Giant Polish Bull.

Now the evening's big fight begins. The "Greek Adonis" is pitted against a gorilla with one eye, a bullet head and a body weighing two hundred and forty pounds. The bell clangs, and they set to. Ten minutes of such activity would leave the average man dead, but one torture follows another, power and endurance are tested to the extreme for forty minutes.

As the bodies bounce off the ropes and fall in heavy somersaults to the boards, the whole ring shakes. The agony of the short arm-lock is followed by the body-scissors round the kidneys. Like a whimpering child's, the gorilla's face is puckered with pain, his huge arms in the air, beseeching, trembling.

"This is a pure example of power—when that happens, everything turns delightfully black."

With fingers crossed, the knuckles are forced into the forehead, and the gorilla writhes, yearning for the oasis of the ropes. The referee runs in circles, kicking him away from his goal. Eventually, by sheer force, the grip is broken. The Greek has misjudged and, before he knows it, finds himself with both hands tied under one leg. The other leg is tied back and he is a human bundle.

"Send it through the mail!" . . . "Embroider him!" . . . "Cute smile, hasn't he?" . . . "Look Dolly, when the perspiration starts you know it's hurting!"

Sweat pours from his back. His hands become so slippery wet that at last he is able to free himself and, in a flash, his knowledge of reflex actions has enabled him to find a death grip.

The gorilla's wife, infuriated, boos her husband's opponent from the audience, while the crowd, in unison, mimics the mammalian grunts and roars of pain.

"Is that his glass eye, or did somebody throw a grape?" . . . "Nice work—he knows the vital spots!" . . . "The whole thing's a bit naïve, isn't it?" . . . "Kick him in the guts!" . . . "Can't you take a joke? He doesn't mean it—he's saving himself for to-morrow night!"

The legs are wrenched apart; the neck is almost broken; the arm practically comes out of the socket.

"Here's a good one, it's going to be a full nelson"; but in some amazing way, it has been eluded.

Catapulted from the ropes, the Greek leaps into the air, feet foremost, striking his opponent's chest with tremendous force. Before the gorilla finds his wind again, the trick has been repeated, but this is to be no hat-trick. The Greek meets his Waterloo with the third flying leap, for the gorilla has, inexplicably, avoided the attack. The boards crack under the stunning fall. With the Adonis' head irretrievably locked between his thighs, the gorilla bounces on the boards, like a baby on a sofa, wreaking irrevocable damage. The flying-mare follows the head-scissors.

Some time passes before the Greek is conscious again. Amid whistles, sirens, bells, the gorilla, in purple dressing-gown, raises his arms victoriously.

When, after two hours of such intense and compelling entertainment one's nervous excitement has cooled, one wonders how these things could be: especially how could men, made of the same flesh, blood, muscle and sinew, voluntarily make a profession of submitting to such barbarism. Yet one's own concentration made it easy to realise that there are elements in this exhibition that appeal to all of us, whether we suspect it or not. As the shock of the first few moments loses its force, unorthodox behaviour becomes orthodox, and barbarism is logical.

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On another evening, between twelve and fifteen thousand people are assembled at Madison Square Garden for the most popular winter sport—Basketball. The eighteen-year-old heroes of the evening have been playing for nine or ten years. Coaches spy around the streets and playgrounds of the local schools to discover new talent. Boys of promise are then invited to become members of various colleges so that they may eventually play on this brilliantly-lit rectangle of yellow-ochre polished wood, marked with the regulation lines in scarlet and blue. Manhattan, in emerald green, has just beaten St. John's, in scarlet. And now the teams of to-night's big match—Fordham and New York University—stream in, in violet and maroon. The atmosphere is that of a circus, with the rival college bands in four corners of the arena, blaring intrepidly, one against the other; the vendors of peanuts and "ice cold drinks," plugging their wares, add to the accumulation of sounds. Two boys rush out on to the floor and throw themselves into a series of strange rhythmic gestures, crouching, leaping into the air and concluding with a frenzied clapping of their hands while their

legs shoot high. They are the cheer-leaders, and could put a Zulu warrior to shame. "Tap, tap," the bands play the "Star Spangled Banner"; everyone stands to attention; then a witty neighbour, settling down to the main excitement of the evening, says, "That song's going to be a hit."

The coaches are giving their respective groups a final team-talk. The boys cluster in a circle, solid masses of violet and maroon. Now the Catholic team, on their knees, are saying their "Hail, Marys" and their final prayer. They cross themselves and run into the arena. The game starts, and at first it is impossible fully to appreciate the dexterity and strategy of the players. No wasted movement. The ball is disposed of with the most consummate ease. A pivot on one foot, and the runner is suddenly sallying in an unexpected direction. Number 26, a blond with an abnormal adam's apple, is particularly spectacular, but in this game ninety per cent depends on team work. A certain lurch, move or thrust produces yells or excited screeches from the audience. The highly coloured satin pants of the players become darkened with sweat. Water is brought in on a tray of paper containers, or ladled from a bucket. A face-towel is shared by each team, but the physical condition and stamina of each player is unimpaired, and the game continues. The audience takes to its heart the umpire with his advanced stages of hysterics, grimacing, leaping into the air, and doubling of fists. He is what is known as a "scenery chewer," but not one detail of the game escapes his eagle eye, as he yells and gesticulates, proclaiming another foul. Underneath his arms, his grey shirt is gradually becoming black; by the end of the game the entire shirt is sopping. In the far corner another cheer-leader is at work, his legs shooting in and out like a toy monkey on a string. The score is creeping up to produce a zenith of excitement. In the brilliantly lit arena, the diamonds of the photographers' flash-bulbs sparkle. The ball is manœuvered super-expertly. No sooner has it touched the player's hand than he must be on the defensive; each man has another designated to oppose him. His opponents run at the man with the ball, flapping their arms like wounded crows, giving Heil Hitler salutes, or lurching with a defeatist "hands up."

Two girls in the audience lean forward, pop-eyed, chewing strenuously. "Jeese, just see the way they feed the ball each other." . . . "You have to have one of those holy medals round your neck to get away with that." . . . "Now you see why the kids wear knee pads."

The score is 36-35, and only one and three-quarter minutes to play. The spectacular Number 26 has got hurt; his ankle has turned over, and while he lies on the ground, surrounded by ministrants, the tireless photographers are on the spot. Poor Adam's Apple is lifted to his seat, where, in an agony of pain and an agony of excitement for his team, he beats the air and leaps to his feet, to be sent back by an acute stab of torture from the ankle that, to-morrow morning, will be as swollen as the object of his excitement—the basket ball.

"Look, they're trying to 'freeze' the ball"; that means the violets are trying to keep possession of the ball for the remaining few seconds of time, but the maroons have moved to outwit them, and the entire Garden yells at the lightning dribble and the thrust of the ball into the air that lands slick through the net basket. The band ostensibly goes mad. It leaps into the air, waving instruments as if electrified. The trombone player's leap has more *élan* than even Nijinsky's. The twelve to fifteen thousand people unanimously rise screaming to their feet, turn for their belongings and troop out in slow procession down the iron staircase, along the circling corridors hung with the photographs of long-forgotten prizefighters, physical marvels of the past, while the morrow's attractions are proclaimed and the pamphlets distributed.

VII

PERSONALITY LOOP

WITH no foundation for its authority, the Social Register has become the only authority nominating aspirants to Society. For little apparent reason it may sometimes classify only one member of a large family, there seems to be no accounting for its choice one way or another. Inclusions and omissions are made for inexplicable reasons. This chronicle, will spurn a certain lady for years and, like New York Society itself, may only accept her suddenly overnight, particularly if she has been seen dancing with a right Munn.

Comparatively few people know about the real New York Society, for it refuses to allow its names to make news. These respectable families, tolerant of others though convinced of their own priority, lead traditional lives of culture much the same as those of the aristocracy of any other capital, if a little more conscientious. They are in no way especially typical of New York. They do not allow their lives to be arranged by the street. They live in their own houses, have their own possessions, their silver, linen-rooms and cellars. They go to church on Sunday, do charitable work, play bridge, listen to music, give dinner-parties and go to balls. They have never heard of Miss Elsa Maxwell. They are punctual, and it is bedtime at the end of the concert. The children very likely speak German as well as French, and unmarried daughters are heavily chaperoned. These people never go to restaurants, have their pictures in the papers or buy their flowers at florists. On the side-table in their libraries will be a basket of tapestry wools and a historical biography.

In New York the young girl "makes an official début." The Junior League takes her in hand, Miss Cutting arranges her parties, every hour of her day is planned, and her parents and family are completely crowded out in the artificial social rush. Americans love entertaining, and it comes easily to them. An additional *cachet* is added to a party by a fresh European visitor. New arrivals are at once plunged into a vortex of gaiety. Naturally this hospitality is not

returned here by the visitors, who have no personal *pied-à-terre* of their own; and when their American hosts come to England, they may find the social tempo rather boringly slow. English people will not give the same series of parties in their honour, but they will invite them for week-ends to their country houses, and this really means more. Every week-end in the summer Blenheim is filled with American visitors by the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, and maybe the reason why the Duchess of Westminster was inspired to give that particularly successful party during her New York visit was because at present she has no country house in England.

Few Americans in England have the correct values on English Society. One of the most established American hostesses asked Adèle Astaire (Lady Charles Cavendish) what sort of a woman her mother-in-law, the Duchess of Devonshire, was, but without waiting for a reply remarked: "She must be very stupid or very dull, for I don't meet her about anywhere."

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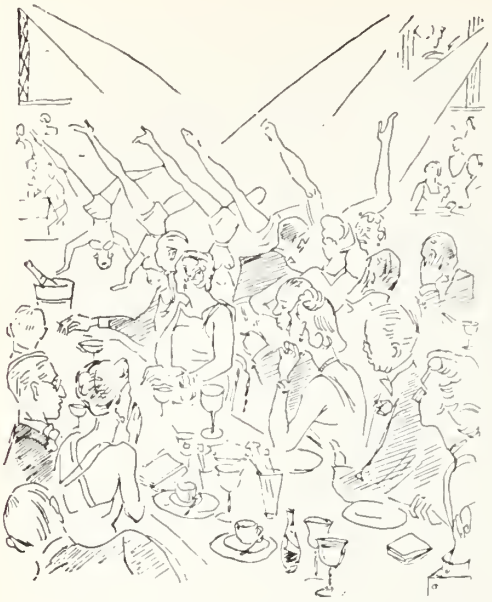
Generally classified as Café Society, a larger group, consisting of many sets, leads an existence more highly publicised. At the top of the scale are certain people who lead the respectable lives of private individuals but have, either with or without their own consent, become newspaper copy, so that their most intimate activities are known to everyone. Café Society does not live at home. There are no old butlers who have become "one of the family," and the three or four footmen who hand round the unlimited assortment of appetisers before dinner have little to do until the next party. If husband and wife should happen to be alone for dinner, it is to sink into bed with a tray. Yet in such a house the telephone may ring unanswered unless, eventually, someone incapable of speaking English should pick up the receiver. He may happen to be the man who has been sent for from a gallery to hang a picture. Mrs. George Baker has one of the most beautiful houses in New York, and it should be also one of the best managed. But little does Mrs. Baker know that, in answer to a

Hat-Check Girl.

Mr. Lucius Beebe wrote after the opening of the Metropolitan Opera Season: *"that Mrs. George Washington Kavanaugh urged members of the working press to pull her hair to show that it was real, and later ordered champagne for the reporters at the bar, seemed somehow a redundancy in view of her costume."*

telephone call to one of her guests, a voice answered: "I can't be bothered taking messages, I'm too busy"; then relented with "Oh, very well then, speak your piece, Missy."

At the bottom of the Café Society class are people without dining-rooms, without sitting-rooms even—the people who live in their bedrooms and at a night-club. They have no possessions, no pretence of culture, only a restless yearning to "have a good time," by which they mean going to bed as late as can be arranged. When they go to the theatre it is to be seen at a first night of only the most frivolous entertainment. Their beat is limited. Lunch at the Colony, no dinner, but a movie before going to El Morocco, where they are photographed against the zebra-skins by Jerome Zerbe, who, night after night, lets off his flashes amid roars of laughter, as if the taking of a photograph was the best joke in the world. They read Cholly Knickerbocker, who gives his public just what it wants to read and describes his victims in an inimitable way. He writes that Madame Sert is a "sartorial bore." At a party he saw "cushiony Mr. Bacon, dear, filthy-rich, Carolyn Trippe" and the "glossy Robert Halsey Patchins." He says: "Personally, I wouldn't be surprised if Madeline fails to show up in either Nevada's cupid's graveyard, or in Florida. It is just possible she may AGAIN forgive and forget what her friends describe as Enzo's 'indifference'." Or again: "Dini and Howard Wainwright have been seen about together but Dini says, 'Tain't true



that she is arranging to become his bride, soooooooo only passing time will tell whether Dini is spoofing her public." This is Café Society's literature.

Its faces are all made to a pattern, its clothes come from a few exclusive shops, its hours of the day are parcelled out in exactly the same manner. In John Frederick's sunlit workrooms, which look like orchards of Japanese paper blossom, the hands are busy all day making the mad hats to be bought for ten pounds each by these sophisticated copycats. Bergdorf Goodman's shoes are equally expensive and equally *répandu*. Hattie Carnegie's dresses are more expensive than those of a *Grande Couture* house in Paris. The jewels worn by these uniformed beauties are designed by the Sicilian Duke of Verdura, who has a heart of gold and a quicksilver tongue. Every fingernail in Café Society is painted the same dark red, by the same "Peggy"; and the skin of every face is stimulated by a bi-weekly visit from "Jeanne," with her attaché-case oozing with unguents composed of sulphur and Fuller's Earth. Miss Eleanor Lambert is their unacknowledged publicity agent; tactful, discreet and utterly charming, she knows how each one wishes to be represented to the world.

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Another world, mostly composed of rich financiers, possesses enormous houses in which it entertains. At a party given in one of these, the forty guests, invited three weeks ago, are now assembling in the Italian Renaissance Palace on Fifth Avenue for their ten-course dinner and evening of formal pleasure. They do not admit to being impressed by their surroundings, but rather lightly dismiss the tapestries, the Donatellos and the *prie-dieux*: "Don't you *love* it?" "Oh, I'm mad about it! It's just the most sympathetic house, such nice taste!" With his unobtrusive back to the assembled company, an old man is hired to play selections from *Tosca* at an organ, the pipes of which were imported encased in their original wood to avoid disturbing their tone.

"Allus, why I do believe you've got a noo bracerlert. Why, it's a noo one on me, in any case." But unmindful of her husband's chagrin, Alice says, "Oh, it's noo, but I've got nothing. My things are just tripe in comparison to yours."

Through the vast hall, with playing fountains and balconies that would house several Italian families, draped with brocades and medieval velvet, the guests move arm-in-arm, in crocodile procession, to the cathedral dining-room.

* * * * *

In England, the beauty parlour is considered the prerogative of the rich, but here in New York any stenographer has her nails and hair attended to regularly many times a month. It is difficult to believe that women could have gone to greater lengths to achieve beauty or to preserve youth at any time in history.

The results of the "beautician's" work can be seen at any night-club, where dozens of middle-aged women present an appearance which must have taken at least a day of treatment to achieve.

One parlour provides a series of treatments known as the "Beauty Day," costing from thirty-five to seventy-five dollars. This entitles the client to an early morning arrival at the parlour and a whole day's attention. The potential Venus begins with a "checking up" by the Beauty Clinic's attendant physician. Based on the result of his examination, her meals for the day are planned by the dietician. She then has a gymnastic "work-out" on a cork floor, followed by relaxation under electrically heated blankets, basking in infra-red rays. An hour's massage follows, and as she lies on a tray of white sand, she submits to ultra-violet rays. In the hydro-therapy department she may be given one of many treatments—under-water massage, Scotch pressure-shower, mineral bath, or the "extremely popular Pasteurised-milk bath," and, as we learn from the official, "a rub-down by the masseuse with Body-Smooth, which makes the skin like sleek white velvet." The client may now slip into her "individual peignoir" for lunch—vegetable cock-tails, fruit hors d'œuvres and a sliced carrot.

After these preliminaries the serious business begins. The face is treated to an electro-tonic massage or a "beauty-lift" mask. The arms and hands have a moulding treatment and a hot-oil manicure. The feet submit to chiropedicure.

For the hair, a "balsam oil permanent" and a coiffure designed to suit the individual. And so to the climax of the day's transformation—a "personality make-up" in a studio where day and night lighting is installed. Wrinkles have been eased, superfluous hairs removed, sagging sinews revitalised—at least for one night.

Some parlours are more ambitious than others. They will change the colour of the eyes by a process of etching on the eyeball. Lips may be tattooed, guaranteeing a permanent glow. Injections of paraffin may fill out unwelcome hollows. Sinister stories are told of the woman who had part of her interior equipment removed to accomplish a slimming of the waistline; and of the operation on a woman's bow-legs which brought eventual amputation instead of glorification.

One parlour specialises in the shelling of the face. This elaborate process entails the discomfort of continuous washing with a strong mineral salt so that, gradually, the skin becomes furrowed, like an old apple, and a smile becomes a painful essay in the grotesque. For six days the old leather tightens and cracks. On the seventh day it falls away to reveal a face as soft and pink as a child's.

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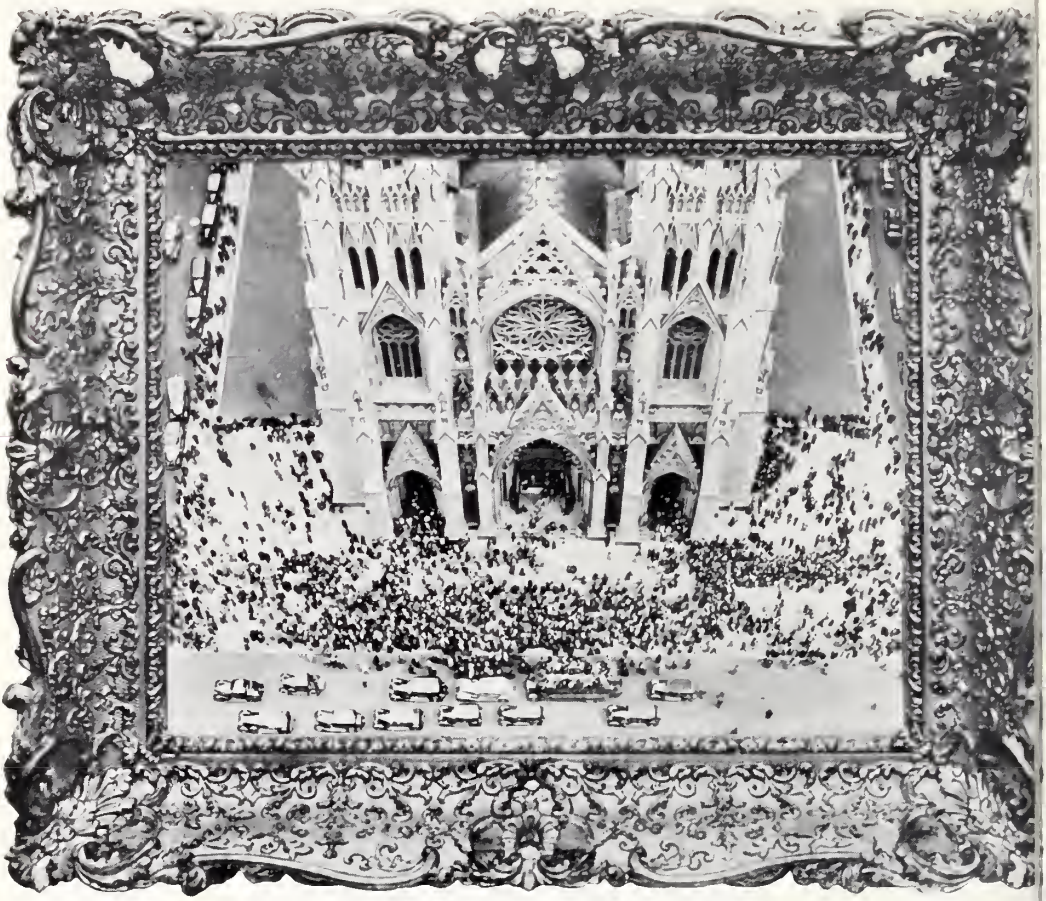
In 1919 the Colony restaurant was started by two Italians from the Knickerbocker Grill—Gene Cavallero and Ernest Cerutti, together with Alfred Artman as the Alsatian chef. The good food was enjoyed by the young bloods of the town, accompanied by their mistresses. By degrees, the wives decided to go there too, and it has now become the most fashionable restaurant in New York. Its decoration is Edwardian, with cream panelling, velveteen chairs, blue drapes, palms and silver, trumpet-shaped vases filled with leaves and some scrap flowers. It is one of the few restaurants with a carpet on the floor, and therefore quiet. The entrance hall, with its gilt framed "art works," chandelier and semi-living greenery, still has a rakish air, but for years now the clientèle has consisted entirely of those people who are considered the most fashionable, or consider to be seen there is to be considered fashionable. At lunch-time it is like a cartoon of a ladies' club portraying the most exaggerated American ladies' hats, or the headdresses of the wildest African tribe. An undeclared competition takes place each day, but the contestants enter the rounds without a smile, or a prize. For these hats, field-flowers have been forced, rooks, pheasants and parrots ruthlessly shot. The food is superb, but these ladies order coffee and salad, or perhaps a carrot



St. Patrick's
Fashion Parade.

purée. Yet it is not for the expensive *purée* that they come here, nor is the food the reason the restaurant has retained its priority over others. There is no head-waiter to be bought. Gene looks after his clients personally, and an offered tip is the last way to get a table near any particular person. The pettifogging lawyer who tried this means of approach to Mr. Vanderbilt was delicately shown his place outside the restaurant.

The success of the restaurant is due to the wisdom and philosophical calm of Gene, who knows not only all about New York Society, but a great deal about humanity. With consummate tact, he conducts the right people to their rightful table. Three hundred are placed at lunch in the comparatively small confines of the restaurant, all in their correct allocations, divorcées separated by the length of the room. His difficulty is not so much in weeding out the sheep from the goats as in keeping away the wolves. He discourages publicity, particularly at certain times of the year, knowing it would be unwise, when the wives are away in Europe or Palm Beach, for a record to appear of the husbands in the company of their girl-friends.

Some clients run accounts which amount to forty or fifty thousand dollars a year. Gene has sixty thousand dollars-worth of bad debts, but many people have such faith in him that they never look at their bills, leaving him to add all percentages for tips. Many parents endow

Gene with the responsibilities of chaperoning their offspring and their companions, and he respects his clientèle far too much to let adventurers sit near those who are likely to be annoyed by them.

If, by some freak of chance, only a handful of people come in for lunch, Gene's eyes show that his attitude is remote. He knows that in every five years a clientèle changes, and a new generation is sure to sprout up. He knows that it is the men between thirty-five and forty-five who spend the most money. Before thirty-five they have not the wherewithal, and after forty-five they have the gout.

No more prompt or efficient service can be found in New York, and, for this reason, as many as seventeen cooks are employed to prepare as few as fifty dinners. For instance, before the first night at a theatre Mrs. Hearst may bring in two dozen people to dine. They arrive late, are slow in choosing, yet have been fed and are on their way to the theatre within half an hour.

At Voisin, Mr. Miller presides over his clients as a strict father. He cares for their welfare, so long as they have time to care for his food. The service is slow, and if you are in a hurry you should not go there, for he expects time to be taken over the enjoyment of the meal. The atmosphere in his restaurant differs from that of the New York outside. The furnishings are of another period. Canaries chirp in cages high up among the powdery-blue valances of the curtains. Here the food is of main importance. One dinner can cost as much as twenty-five dollars, though Mr. Miller despises the client whose chief criterion is price. "Why must you have so much caviare?" he asks the well-known epicure, and throws up his arms in despair. He has been known to refuse to serve another bottle of red wine; not because he considered his clients drunk, but because he thought that they had had sufficient, and more would dull the appreciation of his food. His choice of sweets is purposely limited. "Aren't you going to have my strawberry tart?" He looks hurt if it is refused.

The fashionable crowd is not encouraged, for it is said that they do not pay their bills, and at Voisin outstanding accounts do not exist. The young men with influential friends, but incapable of footing their own bills, are not welcome. Nevertheless, many of the Colony frequenters are to be seen here, when their mood is quieter; mothers and daughters come here together; but, on the whole, fewer young girls are to be seen, and more men.

* * * *

In all the crowded activity of social life in New York, certain individuals stand out in memory. They come from very different worlds. Just as the atmosphere of a particular winter is immediately evoked by hearing a certain tune, so the names of these people call up their own individual auras. I shall try to describe a few of them.

Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt still lives in vast splendour low down on Fifth Avenue, though the surrounding skyscrapers blow such draughts down her chimneys that many of her sitting-rooms have become impossible. She has been crowned Queen of New York Society by the newspapers, and nobody could fill the role better than she, in her crimson velvet tea-gowns, bandeaux and conscious graciousness. She has innate distinction, and her home has real taste, with wonderful *boiseries*, numberless *objets d'art* on the side-tables and single roses in vases in memory of each of her sisters. Least snobbish and most loyal of friends, she has a penchant for Royalty and the uncrowned heads of Europe, and as she powders her nose says of the English Royal Family: "I would lay down my life for them, they have been so wonderful to me."

Her parties are on the grand scale. Outside, crowds assemble on Fifth Avenue to watch her guests walk up the red carpet. Inside, the parrots squawk and the lapdogs yap down from the balconies as the fifty lunch guests or hundred dinner guests troop past the gargantuan malachite vase in the great white hall to find their places at the long table in the bigger dining-room.

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In the Parent Game Herr Doktor Kommer, born in Cernowitz (now Cernauti), has been given the Queen of Spades as mother, and for father any old Chinaman. To me he is an adopted father.

For recreation from hard work, which has started at seven in the morning whenever he is in New York, he arrives punctually, day after day, to be host to the most beautiful women at the corner table, under the photograph of Alexander Woolcott taken by Lady Colefax, at the Colony Restaurant. Mr. Woolcott has asked his enormous public: "What does Kaëtchen use for money?"—with the result that disagreeable strangers are apt to throw an unflattering and even sinister light upon the "mystery" of the Doctor. But it is more interesting to learn that many entire families of refugees are spiritually and economically dependent upon him, and that he takes an almost masochistic delight in helping others. Why, you may ask, should he

take the trouble to dole out these incessant invitations and presents with Crœsus-like munificence to the beauties of the world? If any excuse must be made, it is merely that Dr. Kommer, saying he is no Adonis, finds it flattering to his ego to be surrounded by such beauty, and that, as a man of discrimination, he finds relaxation when confronted by good looks. Or that perhaps it is merely due to his Christian qualities.

His judgment in legal and business matters, combined with an exceptional personal integrity, would be worthy of a great Chancellor. He calls himself a Public Utility; for me he has wings. All sorts of people go to him for help. His advice is abstract and reasonable; often unpalatable and unacceptable, it is therefore seldom acted upon, so that those who have not taken it come to him again to help them out of the difficulties they have brought upon themselves. He plays people as he plays cards, which he does excellently. He is a first-rate chess-player; and the essence of his advice on personal matters is legally and mathematically worked out. He is not much of a psychologist, and is consequently often disappointed. He puts up with an objective lack of integrity, yet if he knows that people mean to be fundamentally dishonest he will have nothing to do with them. He considers lying the greatest living evil, and believes in honesty more than friendship. He says that he has never dreamt, and his life is so based on scepticism that he would rather die than admit a ghost.

Is he a doctor? No. Academic qualifications had to be invented once because he was sent from an American college to lecture on Bismarck, which he could not have done without a degree. What has been his career? When he first arrived in England before the War he had read so much English and spoken so little of the language that he asked a colleague: "Where dost thou dwell?" To confound the Nazis, he now occasionally wears the Iron Cross, First Class, which was awarded him for pro-German propaganda. He has been journalist, author and translator of many plays; he is an amateur lawyer, teaches Mrs. Astor to speak German *via* the poetry of Heine, and when Reinhardt was King of Salzburg, Dr. Kommer was Chamberlain.

With so many asking his advice in private, legal and financial matters, he is yet never hurried. His point of view is always unexpected. His seeming contradictions are based on a persistent logic, yet it is impossible to gauge his taste, which is always likely to be surprising. Seldom would one say: "Kaetchen would love this," or "How he would hate it." He will shake his head and smile

deprecatingly about the latest current success in the theatre, explaining why it is bad; but he went thirty times to see *Pigeons and People* during its short run.

He cannot swim, but he can float. So, walking into the Kammer lake until he is up to his waist in water, he embeds his walking-stick and, holding on to it with one hand (so that he shall not drift), a cigarette in the other hand, he floats happily like a giant water-lily.

With an enormous personal charm, he has an appreciation of *belles lettres* and gramophone music, and is very particular where he eats. Mr. Paley may induce him to his house, but in most private houses he considers the food uneatable. Mr. Baruch, Mr. Cravath, Mr. Harrison Williams and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Luce may dine with him at Luchow's, but the Colony sees him for lunch. At his table, Mrs. Harrison Williams will eat liver and bacon, Marlene Dietrich, hot oysters. You will see Miss Tilly Losch, Mrs. Julian Chaqueneau, Mrs. William Paley, Miss Ina Claire and Mrs. Averell Harriman—though the latter arrives so late that there is only time for a cup of coffee and a cigarette through a long paper holder. But not only are the most popular ladies welcomed; he will delight in championing many a goose, and it must be said that his is generally the ultimate triumph.

He is apt to deflate the extremes of the spirit, but he has great courage, and when all his friends are despondent over some disaster, he shrugs his shoulders, saying: "Welle, I mean to say, vat of it? It's the best thing that could possibly have happened."

To strangers he is a man of mystery—but it is not for the outward things he does that he remains an unknown quantity to his loyal, devoted and utterly dependent friends.

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Mrs. Vincent Astor is a lady of great integrity and distinguished tastes. Her head is like a flower on a very long stalk. She has the elegant lines of a Nymphenberg statuette and the straight back of Royalty.

On February 1st, 1892, it was the Mrs. Astor of the period, "the Queen of New York," who created the term the "Four Hundred" by inviting only that number of guests to her ball. The Mrs. Astor of to-day is a figurehead who not only respects her position in Society, but adds to her responsibilities by great civic and charitable work. The interest nearest her heart is the Musicians' Emergency Fund, but

her other activities cause her office to overflow into her bedroom, and the grapefruit remains uneaten on the window-sill in the rush of the morning's telephoning and dictation. I believe that royal ladies, wishing to be rid of bores, twist a bracelet as a signal for their lady-in-waiting to deal with the situation. Mrs. Astor continuously flicks her bracelet, and her hands, of a childlike delicacy, are one of her best features. But she needs no assistance in a dismissal, for she can be very firm.

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In social circles a few people are continuously the topic of conversation. Mrs. Corrigan is one. With the eyes of a hare, kid-glove skin, a fine bridge to a particularly fine nose, her mouth is her least good feature. Though she must be classed in the social category, and passionate attention is paid to the detail of her entertainments, her most serious interests are philanthropy and finance. She has the mind of a business-man, knows about higher mathematics, and to the business-men with whom she confers it must come as rather a surprise to read the reports of her terpsichorean gaieties.

She never takes anything for granted. For her, chandeliers and polished floors will never loose their lustre. A Peer is always a Peer. If she were to write, her novels would have an affinity with those of Ouida. Mrs. Corrigan has a mystical quality, and her world is full of chivalry and gallantry; and she continuously makes use of old-world expressions and maxims. Young men taking out young women are "addressing them," and once she reproved a young man by saying, "I am glad that I have found a barb of contempt sharp enough to penetrate your thick epidermis."

She is indefatigable in her generous impulses. Every liner that arrives or leaves will contain someone to whom she has sent caramels or yellow lilies; and I have received a "Bon Voyage from Laura" basket of fruit only to discover that Mrs. Corrigan herself was travelling in a neighbouring cabin.

At her dances, the waiting chauffeurs are given as good a supper as her guests, and old servants, secretaries and unknown people tell stories of unpublicised kindnesses. But only a handful of people know that the "Mrs. L" who supplied two hundred of the poorest families in Vienna, throughout the winter, with baskets of food specially planned to contain the necessary vitamins and calories for each individual case, was the "Laura" who, in spite of her picture dresses and familiarity with Rolls-Royces and Royalty, and *suites en suite*, prays to

God to keep her simple, saying, "Simplicity is the last refuge of the complex mind."

* * * * *

Miss Elsa Maxwell is an unending topic of conversation. Her diary only makes her more of a mystery. What does she wish to achieve? In what capacity does she most wish to shine? What urges her to mount the platform when she admits she has nothing to offer and says she doesn't care? With the assurance of a Velasquez dwarf and a huge cavity between each finger, her spontaneous generosity is only equalled by her vitality. She provides entertainment on a vast scale for those too lazy or incapable to organise their own, and she will undertake with zest propositions from which the normal person would flee in horror. She will organise a Prom at Princeton for the sheer hell of it, or plan a party in an outdoor skating-rink in uncertain weather; but with her robust enthusiasm and her cascades of cavalier laughter, she is likely to bring the evening to a successful close. On her way to bed she will buy the morning papers to read the account of her entertainment, and will spend the rest of the night reading indiscriminately anything from Voltaire to Princess Daisy of Pless. She has a photographic memory, remembers every face she has ever seen and memorises everything she has read, knowing by heart, it is said, several entire plays of Shakespeare.

So overwhelming is her energy that, after a hard morning of secretarial work, she will subjugate a dozen intelligent people to listen at lunch to the morning's adventures of vast salaries offered for books, radio contracts, films and lecture-tours, in which no one believes but herself.

By asserting herself so forcibly she has become a public figure, and she is more flattered that a fan should ask for her autograph on Broadway than that she should be commanded to breakfast by the King of the Belgians. Having started life as a snob, she now wages war on snobs, Proust thus being proved wrong when he said that the climber always wishes to shut behind him the door which has at last admitted him.

Her love of the unsuitable is highly developed, and by the sheer force of her personality she succeeds in her determination to create fantastic situations. I shall always remember the glint in her eyes as she planned, with the manager of the Waldorf Hotel, that special felt shoes should be made to prevent the cows slipping on the parquet floor during their entrance at her Barnyard party.

She will invite the British aristocracy to blow feathers on a sheet or the Italian nobility to dress up as babies; but her schemes were frustrated when Mrs. Vincent Astor refused to do a strip-tease act at her "Burlesque Charity Party."

Albeit, she appears never to need money. Again we ask, how does she pay for her parties? Why on earth does she give her parties? But Miss Maxwell cannot help giving parties. Perhaps her real ambition is to become a professional, but her versatility makes it difficult for her to decide in what capacity. Yet she would not be satisfied at being professional in the one field in which she is unique—that of giving parties. The keynote of her character is deliberately to raise difficulties for the pleasure of overcoming them. Her courage is unflagging. She has never been known to complain; no disappointment can damp her enthusiasm. Nature's Hostess is also a Monument of Hope.

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No matter what her mood may be, the impromptu entertainment value that Miss Tallulah Bankhead has to offer is intense. Her moods are extreme; she may be hilarious or tragically sunk in inspissated gloom, but she is never dull. At the Hotel Gotham, at all hours of the night, she and her satellites may be eating unexpected foods, drinking champagne, roaring with hysterical laughter at Roger Davis, or sitting in groups in the extremes of despair, telling one another harrowing stories of death and destruction. The door will open, Roger Davis, very serious, with pale face, will tiptoe into the room asking, "Has the wreath arrived?"

The situations leading up to Miss Bankhead's appearance in New York in Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* were typical, though it was not typical that the road-tour had been a flop and that the company had been given their closing notices before the first night. Miss Bankhead had telephoned from Cincinnati for me to help her with some more costumes, and the day before the opening, Cleopatra, with acute laryngitis exaggerating further her troubles and her hoarse voice, marched up and down her hotel rooms in her quarter-finished costume and paper crown, hoarsely screeching or merely croaking for Edie: "E—ie, E—ie, bring me some black coffee; give me a cigarette!" Miss Bankhead was sufficiently in the last stages of despair for a certain seam in her skirt to send her into a sudden tantrum. "Don't you see it's got to cover me HERE," she bawled at the old dressmaker, kneeling in front of her, mouth full of pins. "Do you want the queen of Old

Left to right: The Countess of Abingdon, Mrs. William Rhinelander Stewart, Mrs. and Mr. Harrison Williams, Mrs. Vincent Astor—*and above:* Mr. Beverley Bogert

BALLROOM CARICATURES: DECORATIONS FOR THE PARTY GIVEN BY THE DUCHESS OF WESTMINSTER AND CAPTAIN AND MRS. KELLETT AT HAMPSHIRE HOUSE

In this box, left to right—Front row: Miss Gloria Baker, Miss Elsa Maxwell and Mr. Cholly Knickerbocker. *Back row:* Captain Alistair Mackintosh, Mr. William Rhinelander Stewart, Mr. Condé Nast and Prince Serge Obolensky.

Mrs William Rhinelander Stewart
Mrs Harrison Williams
Mrs Pat.
Orson Welles
Chirico
American Ba
Mrs Harold Talbott
Alfred Lunt & Lynn Fontanne
Sherman Clarke
Ina Claire

Clifton Webb
Lorina
Paul Draper
Gloria Swanson.
Paul Draper
Elsie de Wolfe
mrs Von Hofmann-sthal
Ruth Ford
Gertrude Stein
Tchelitch

Nile to go on half-naked?" The dress-rehearsal was one of the most disastrous evenings in the Theatre. Nothing went well. The scenery did not fit, the incidental music and "noises off" came in on the wrong cues, the actors were struck dumb as they fumbled about in the semi-darkness. How Miss Bankhead could sustain her temperamental hysterics for so long I do not know, but she is phenomenal. All night she raged; her scenes as Cleopatra were chaotic. Her sandals hurt; she would trip over her train, hiss and swear in the middle of a love scene and, even when offstage, her voice, like that of a tortured soul, could be heard wailing and bellowing as she told the management what she thought of it. In the middle of her comedy scene she suddenly decided on a lighting rehearsal. Her maidservant, Charmian (Fania Marinoff, or Mrs. Carl van Vechten) was made to sit on Cleopatra's throne, while Miss Bankhead, in headdress ornamented with the serpent of Old Nile, with twitching eyelids, came down into the stalls to watch the effects of varying lights on Charmian's face. "She looks *awful*. Look at her huge nose. I've got a big nose, so has she, but why only light that up? And look at her lines, *look* at the lines each side of her nose. Why, they're not lines, they're CAVERNS!" The lights were altered, Charmian looked enchanting and Miss Bankhead, back on her regal perch, scowled across the footlights with screwed-up eyes, shouting: "What does it look like, E—ie?" Edie, slightly abashed, called back from the dress circle: "It's very good lighting now, Miss Bankhead," to which Cleopatra retorted: "You've got no guts! What's it like, what's it like, I say, ANYBODY?" Since no reply was forthcoming and the curtains were pulled to, Cleopatra, or as the critics rather cruelly dubbed her, "the Serpent of Old Swanee," let off her parthian shot. "Just as I thought, *not a friend in the house.*" . . .

* * * * *

The son of the Rosenkavalier poet, Mr. Raimund von Hofmannsthal, is a dynamo of energy, sweeping all in contact with him into the swift stream of the ideas of his mind. Some strangers are baffled by him as he appears for a second, waves his arms frantically demanding, "Why *must* they do that to Mozart?"—and is gone. His friends step off the train at Rhinebeck, after a week in New York, to find themselves immediately galvanised by his enthusiasm into co-operation with him in the most fantastic intellectual projects. "Woudernt it be vonderful if . . ." He has more ideas each day than a dozen other people. His flights of fancy are not only poetical, but often practical.

He bubbles over with high spirits. He is one of the few people of our epoch to combine aesthetic entertainment with extravagance, and his extravaganzas are never flamboyant. The evenings on the Kammer Lake in celebration of the visits of the Duke and Duchess of Kent, Mr. Toscanini, Mr. Einstein, the Franklin Roosevelts or whoever it might be, are, together with the charm of Salzburg, alas, gone. But the memory will remain of the house-orchestra playing on one barge whilst a sit-down dinner was served on another, while from yet a third rockets hissed into the sky and broke into separate, quiet balloons of slow light.

His wife, the sister of Vincent Astor, and one of the real, and most sympathetic, eccentrics of the day, has become yearly more beautiful. With wrists that stretch half-way up her arms, only equalled in delicacy by those of an East Indian, with raven's-wing hair, she is now the most distinctive beauty in New York. Or she is like a figure in a Persian miniature, in tulip brocades of olive-green, ox-blood red and black. Her lunar beauty is too elusive for all to appreciate, and such a head should be flaunted more proudly; yet, in her inconspicuous corner, in a plain black dress, she is more outstanding than the fashionably dressed women around her. Her exacting fastidiousness is that of the heroine in Hans Andersen's *Princess and the Pea*, and her taste in all things is that of a meticulous refinement.

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Mr. Woolcott is the renowned *raconteur* of New York, but in a city where the art of conversation is seldom attempted, Mrs. Muriel Draper holds a unique position. One of the great personalities among the intelligentsia, with the face of a sensitive prizefighter and wearing Poiretesque clothes that might belong to anyone from Haroun-al-Raschid to Captain Kidd, she is a brilliant and inspired conversationalist. Her talk is spontaneous and adventurous; she gives the impression of making a discovery with every sentence. Alert and sympathetic in spotting the foibles of other people, she has developed a technique of wittily translating people to themselves.

Sitting on the same theatrical-property throne for the ritual of dispensing tea every Thursday, Mrs. Draper's monologues dazzle successive circles of guests. Put her in argument with the most celebrated European wit on Russia or the Russian Ballet and she will prove a worthy match. The flashes of her rapier-thrusts produce the electric effect of lightning. On New Year's Eve she invites to her house

everyone she has met throughout the year. Such an assortment of politicians, writers, painters, museum-directors, negroes, singers and young men who design dresses will not be assembled again until the beginning of next year.

Her son is a most outstanding dancer; unlike any other, more like a fencer or a skater, is Paul Draper. Looking like an inspired game-keeper (he has an aura of eighteenth-century country sport about him and brings stables, horses, guns and ferrets to the mind), he dances with no facility. One would say that he had overcome a lack of natural grace by such determination and monastic concentration that

he has evolved something much greater. With the simplicity of the real artist he will explain that he loves to dance, and here, with all his love, he presents a Haydn Minuet. To our astonishment and delight, Paul Draper, using his taps more eloquently than castanets have been used, intensifies the moving elegance of his body with bird-pecking feet, while Eddie Duchin's band plays Palestrina, Beethoven and Scarlatti. This surprising popular entertainment, by its freshness and purity, has elevated cabaret-dancing into the highest sphere. It has taught us to realise that coon-like frenzies of rhythm have become not only coarse but *démodé*; and Draper's ecstatic anxiety and furrowed

brow will surely wipe away the inane smiles that have been, heretofore, a pernicious part of dance routines.

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Mr. Thornton Wilder, though famous, likes to remain apart from society like thousands of other charming, fussy, excitable, pedagogic professors throughout America. Deeply religious, highly intellectual and with infinite book-learning, he has no social competence. His unostentatious, needle-threading sincerity is even a hindrance to him socially. Yet his play, *Our Town*, proves that not only does he know about humanity, but about New York, and he has successfully tapped the vast sentimental reservoirs of its audiences. His intimates never quite know whether he is secretly laughing at them, and whether or not his childish manner is mysterious.

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Remote from the world of to-day, living in one of the few remaining private houses on 57th Street, Louis (Mahatma) Eilchemius, over seventy, paralysed, sitting wrapped in a shawl beside his bed, is as full of vitality as he ever was. Born of a German banking family, always sufficiently well-off to paint unmolested, he is one of the few painters that America has produced; and now he sits surrounded by his pictures. Painted on canvas, on cardboard, on old letters and backs of writing-blocks, they are stacked in feverish profusion around the dark walls; in heaps, on tables, sofas and floor of the already over-crowded rooms. Piles of pompadour-coiffured nudes splash in mountain streams and waterfalls on the grand piano. It is twenty years since he stopped painting, but his output is enormous.

He rails against the public that has not sufficiently recognised him. Gesticulating wildly with long, bird-claw hands which have dry and pointed nails two inches long, his hair streaming on his shoulders, his eyes have the intensity of an old dog. He possesses great personality, and in spite of his age and infirmities, a great nobility. Like a child, he speaks only what is in his mind, so that a new code of manners is employed and he is apt to offend. "And who are you? Never heard of you? You must be fifty at any rate, but you don't look more than forty-eight," he shouts frighteningly.

He denies that he made his nudes look wooden. "To H-E-L-L," he barks, "with the critics!" He has no use for them! They are all alike, and dumb-bells not to accept him as a great painter! He is

"great." No one could paint ocean as well as he. His trees and forests are every bit as good as Courbet. Look at the *recherché* of tonality in "The Green Arbour!" And not only was he a great painter, but a great writer. Great! And he has made mathematical discoveries! And not only that, but he has invented and written a treatise on an infallible way of seducing a woman (by blowing on the nape of her neck)! And he was a poet. Herewith an example of his style:

> How can we noblemen instruct those men:
> Collectors, buyers to know: what's good or bad?
> All dealers would guard 'gin extortion then—
> And painters great would be again so glad.
> For forty years no dealer hung on his walls
> One magic painting of mine—not even now!
> To Hades wid de bunch—extortioners all—
> No gentlemen they—they'll get it in Hell, I vow!
>
> * * * * *
>
> N.B.—The only dealer who treated me
> Well is Valentine Dudensing.
> Also Mrs. Morton and Patrick Codyre.
> Hail to him! to her!

Not only was he a poet, but a composer. "You know Beethoven, don't you? Well, I'm like Beethoven. I'm great."

His brother, aged eighty-five, lives with him in this house untouched this last fifty years. The lace mats still hang on the backs of chairs, and the stuffed owls sit on the mantelpiece, but the only visitors are the directors of museums who, one by one, decide that here are the paintings of a genius.

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My first American friend and champion was Mrs. Eddie Duchin (then Miss Marjorie Oelrichs). When, in her early twenties, Mrs. Duchin died, it was for me as if all trees had died. With each year her integrity and strength of character grew, and for me she had become one of the foundations of my American existence.

Not only in character and appearance was she one hundred per cent American, but she possessed all the best qualities of the young New York woman—loyalty, courage and a wonderful sense of humour. Yet unlike most women in her milieu, she was adaptable. Her friends,

chosen from every walk of life, had varied interests. She was equally sympathetic to musicians, artists, sportsmen and business-men, and fitted perfectly into the national life of Austria, France, England, Scotland or Poland. She had instinctive appreciation and sensibility for the world's art, and derived enjoyment from the most popular forms of entertainment. Her sense of humour, likewise, made her susceptible to the subtlest wit and the broadest jokes.

Sometimes the intervals between meetings were so long that one forgot the intensity of one's affection for her; but when she came smiling into the room, took off her shoes, combed her honey hair (cut like a page-boy's), settled into the chair and asked in her dry, crackling voice, "What's noo?" one was struck afresh by her rare qualities and friend-liness. For ever twisting with her thumb the ring on her little finger, with each smile her hair would be thrown back.

Without being an intellectual, she seemed to know and understand everything. Whatever circumstances prevailed, she kept the true values of life. Though much of the time with her was spent in laughter, one took her very seriously, minding very much what she felt, and her gentle reproof, "Now *really*," was more effective than the most stringent criticisms or all the threats of damnation.

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As a result of a fusion of natural talent, poetical beauty and a highly cultivated technique of living, Mrs. Harrison Williams has become a public figure. The public gives her the same glamour that the Duchess of Guermantes held for Proust.

Having provided elation for many, she has achieved humility, and thus she disarms the envious, because there is no weapon against envy except spirituality. Catullus wrote a request to the Graces:

> Ponder my words. If so that any be
> Known guiltily here of incivility,
> Let what is graceless, discompos'd and rude
> With sweetness, smoothness, softness be endued.

She is the paradox of tradition allied to strangeness. Her hands have the deftness and control of a pianist's or a surgeon's. She has the restraint of a violin. It is appropriate that she should have the possessions that, were they not hers, would be better off in a museum.

Although she is not inclined towards the publicising of the fact

that she is one of the "best-dressed women," and although she is the antithesis of the spectacular, it happens that she creates wherever she goes, in spite of understatement, immediate admiration. Not only is she a great asset to New York Society, but, indeed, might be considered a symbol of good taste for the entire Western world.

High up above the noise, looking down upon the surrounding water as if from a lighthouse, Mr. Harrison Williams, in his country-house office, is informed of the Wall Street activities below. In a series of pine-panelled rooms, with fires burning in the grates, English chintz curtains and maps of his public utilities distributed on the walls, Mr. Williams conserves his energies for business matters of only supreme importance, and for the full enjoyment of his relaxations.

Mr. Williams, an American Buddha, has found the secret of perpetual youth.

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Pavel Tchelitchew, the Russian painter, in his apartment on 73rd Street, has been working for two years on a vast picture, his interpretation of the universe in terms of freaks. Not very good at English, he expresses himself more graphically than the finest linguist with phrases chosen from half a dozen different languages in true "Old Régime" Russian manner. He interpolates his descriptions with frantic gestures and wild grimaces, followed by explosive noises and squeaks that, in turn, convey convincingly the flight of a butterfly, the trembling of an aigrette or the noise of the wind blowing a paper off a table. No one describes more acutely the subtlety of variations in colour in such terms as "some sort of a greenish, yellowish, blueish" or "pinkish, greyish, brownish"; and by unconventional means he can invoke a picture or an incident he has seen years before. On a walk in the country he will stop still and look at the kaleidoscopic landscape with his head between his legs, saying: "What impresses me is that dark green, a juicy green, not olive, but dark, a sort of No. 1 English green, but mixed with *ombra naturale*"; and Kchessinska lives for ever when he describes her in the Imperial Ballet.

"Charlie, Charlie, answer the telephone," he shouts to Charles Henri Ford, the young poet from Mississippi, degutting a duck in the kitchen.

"No, let Parker go." Parker Tyler is also a poet of the coming generation, but he is now typing a prose article on a new movie for the *Partisan Review*.

"Garbo is far more a fetish than an actress," he taps, "nor do I mean that she is unaware of this. Her job is what is known as glamour, which I might dare to define in her case as the inexplicable despotism of some rose-leaf anthropomorphic, a legendary grandmother presiding over a not impossible fireside." . . .

"Charlie, telephone!"

. . ."She has made the most of phenomenal personal characteristics: the long, poetic, prehensile arms of a growing youth; the virginal torso appropriately accented with a monosyllabic pelvis." . . .

"Charlie, Charlie!"

. . ."The head (especially with the hair drawn up on top as in this picture) held as insolently and easily as a white goose's. The face itself (destiny's hands are many) is not without a more spiritual and edifying lesson: it has the equilateral beauty of some profound heroic masochism; it is fundamentally the face of a silent and nobly suffering slave, grimly humorous (with one eyebrow set back and up as though with a hair-pin) yet relentlessly combative in its supineness; a supineness which is a truly political proneness." . . .

"Charlie, will you *please* answer the telephone!"

"Parker, you go answer the telephone."

"Owh, awlright," . . . "a truly political proneness. . . ." "Hullo, what do you want? Just hold on. I'll see. It's Aggie Hippo-Grayston."

"Say Mr. Tchelitchew has just stepped out walking."

"Mr. Tchelitchew has just stepped out."

"Oh, these donna vecchi. Quesu vecchi donni. However do they think I finish worrrrk on my picture. Absolutely je ne peup pas, je ne peup PAS! Non posso. Dura, Durnoi!! Durischa!!! Durachna!!!! Durak!!!!!" He steps back, peering through half-shut eyes at the freaks of nature that he has created. Again the telephone. It is Balanchine in further trouble with the ballet. The voices in Russian squeak and pish and fizz at one another: "Kakoye, Sveentsvo." Back at his canvas, Tchelitchew sympathises: "Tout est wrong avec Georges. Oh, my dear, they think they don do the Ninth Symphony—Ballet Caravan will burst and Lincoln Kirstein has been asked to go with De Basil, and Zorina's mother has had her appendix cut away. . . ." Ford and Tyler in the kitchen cover the duck with olives and raisins and argue as to whether Auden and Spender have perverted the principles of Marxism, or whether the principles of Marxism have perverted Auden and Spender. Tchelitchew, paint-brushes in hand,

is back at the telephone delivering a machine-gun-like monologue into the mouthpiece:

"Ah, my dear, you must see *Norma*. It's arbsolutely *won*derful! Everything's so ohld—the scenery's quite transpahrent and these huge barrels with heads, these cows, litted up with a pinkish-blueish cloud, are doing the most inconvenient things! And while the terrible things are happening on the stage, the music is so beautiful! Such a sensi-tivity! You would die to see their faces with fat, exploding cheeks—poop!—and dimples bursting everywhere. And their some-kind-of-a huge titty breasts, faisant toutes sortes de choses, and their wobbling *behinds* (my dear!), and the diamond horse-show, och, it's extrawdinary! Full of brooms and household utensils. And Dorothy Chadwick was there, my dear, and Mrs. Brewster and all sorts of men with eyes and mouths like navels, who pay no attention while—*brrumph*—the actors make gestures of lobsters and crabs being polite to each other—it is like under-sea life—the hypertrophy of exquisiteness. And—*swish*—they flip their trains and—*frroupt*, up—and they sing, how they sing!! It's divine, you will *die*, the music is so lyric and melodious and so *elarborate*. And when she takes the knife to go and kill her children, she is like a chicken after a good meal, and she starts to cluck, cluck quietly—and then they both cluck, cluck, cluck, cluck more and more, louder and louder, and then they scream and yell, not daring to look at each other, and not hearing each other; higher and higher; first like a nightingale and then higher still. Then they come into the kingdom of the mice and, finally, a mosquito. We *must* get Marie Harriman's box for *Norma* next time, and we'll go, you and me and Sister and Charlie and Parker and Balanchine and Zorina. And we must ask Halicka, one day you will like her, and Nicolas and the Grand-Duchess Marie."

Through the open kitchen door the poets can be heard.

"Look, the gizzard's full of grit." "Sister saw Ted Shawn last night. She said he's so exquisite, he drives his automobile with his legs crossed."

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Some people swim before the mind in groups. The Stettheimer Sisters, though each an individualist, are inseparable in memory. Carrie, in a dog-collar and pompadour, has spent her lifetime working on a doll's-house which nobody must see until its completion. Ettie, with black bangs and jet fringes, has worked for years on a novel

which is never finished; and Florine, who once deserted the canvases in her studio and came out into the open to design the opera sets for Gertrude Stein's *Four Saints in Three Acts*, in spite of approbation, has sunk back into her shell. Looking like a moth that has fed on a gold scarf, as Tchelichew described her, she is perhaps the greatest *fantasiste*, living in an apartment as spindly as her paintings; waited upon by coloured servants, who create a note of solidity in a setting that is a bower of beads and lace, of scarlet and pink cellophane grottoes; where the dining-room curtains are made of gold chocolate-paper.

Until recently the three sisters lived together, and entertained the intelligentsia in an extraordinary apartment-house decorated to resemble the Château of Blois and Chambord, but ill-health obliged them to discontinue their larger dinner-parties, to which were bidden such people as Mr. Henry McBride, the art critic; Mr. Virgil Thompson, the composer; Mr. Carl Van Vechten, who has given up writing to spend his life in a photographic darkroom, and his actress wife, Fania Marinoff; Mr. and Mrs. William Seabrook; and Mr. and Mrs. Valentine Dudensing, who, by their enthusiasm and integrity, have succeeded in popularising modern art more than any other couple in America.

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People divide themselves into various groups: those that like or dislike the President, those who worship Miss Dorothy Thompson, listen to the pianist Serkin, read the novels of John O'Hara or the poetry of Wallace Stevens. Some groups of friends send invitations for the same sort of week-ends in the country. Others give breakfast-parties at midday on Sunday.

The Russian nobility, scattered as hotel managers, clerks, manne-quins, water-colourists and sales-ladies, still celebrate the Russian feast-days in the traditional manner. At Easter, after a week of prayer and confession, all the Russian foods—*Pasha*, *Cooritch* and *Zakouski* (with cold sucking-pig and horse-radish sauce)—are prepared in the kitchenette, and the parties continue with songs till dawn. Prince Serge Obolensky organises the gaieties of the Russian New Year at the "Maisonette Russe"; Caucasian dancers flick burning swords out of their mouths and dance the *czardas*. Toasts are drunk out of horns, and all those who have become work-people—competitors, earning their livings in the most strenuous market in the world—regain for the night the privileges and gaiety of the old days. At the Russian Tea-

rooms, the dancers, composers and choreographers argue about the Ballet.

Downstairs, in the bar of "Twenty-One," my friend Mr. Walter Winchell must gather a stock of information in such close proximity with Mr. George Jean Nathan, Mr. H. L. Mencken and Mr. Sinclair Lewis, while upstairs, drinking Ovaltine and wearing a woollen tam-o'-shanter, is Miss Lilian Gish, making one of her rare appearances. Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Swope, Mr. George Kaufman and his wife (with a striking resemblance to Rebecca in the Bible), Mr. Howard Dietz and his wife (*née* Miss Tanis Guinness), Mr. and Mrs. Harpo Marx, and other members of the West Point set, discuss the merits of the night's "first night." Mr. Swope, a power-station of human energy, has the enthusiasm of a schoolboy at the Debating Society who finds to his enchantment that he can speak brilliantly. His wife, without ever raising her voice, has one of the strongest if quietest, personalities. The atmosphere at their Long Island home is refreshing. A crowd of friends are staying there, the numbers constantly added to by a fresh stream of visitors, all tended by dozens of coloured maids to enhance the large-family atmosphere. Meals are served at most times of the day and night, and there is little chance of arriving late, for lunch may not begin until three and dinner until ten o'clock. Friends from the worlds of politics, finance, society, literature, journalism and even the screen play intellectual games or argue till dawn, and eat lamb chops (cooked as nowhere else in the world, slightly under-done, yet burned on the outside), while Chinese food is produced in addition to the usual exquisite cuisine. To be taken under the Swope wing is indeed an honour.

Of other groups, the Whitney family comprises its own, with Mr. Donald Ogden Stewart as an adopted member. Mr. and Mrs. Charles McArthur—she is Helen Hayes—and Mr. Ben Hecht form another group, sometimes swelled by the presence of Mr. Alexander Woolcott and Miss Eleanora Mendelssohn. The "social intellectuals" might be the term of classification for the gathering together of Mrs. Samuel Welldon, Miss Marion Hall, Mr. and Mrs. Cass Canfield, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Marshall, Count and Countess Jessensky, Mr. and Mrs. J. Courtland Barnes and Mrs. Nathaniel Bowditch Potter, who has the gift of making a uniform apartment into one of the most personal and charming homes in New York. These people live mostly in their homes, as do Mrs. Redman, Mrs. Cameron Clark, Mrs. Filley and Mrs. Vincent Astor—which brings us to the world of music, with

Mr. and Mrs. Chester Burden, Mrs. Chadwick and Mrs. Brewster as unflagging devotees. These people have the cultural pursuits and family interests of county families. Mrs. Benjamin Moore, in a house in which splendid taste and comfort reach their apex, leads a well-ordered existence of restrained social activities, but Mrs. George Baker has, perhaps, the most natural flair for interior decoration, and her baroque drawing-room, with caramel-coloured palm trees, is unique and most becoming. Of the bridge set is Mrs. Henry Gray, whose name people of her world mention as if some *cachet* were derived by so doing.

Mrs. Welldon is one of the few New Yorkers living in the house in which she was born. Still surrounded by much of her mother's furniture, the first guests arrive to find her arranging the flowers very carefully and individually. Mrs. Welldon, though few would suspect it, would have made a good stage impresario; she knows exactly how to achieve her effects, and before the annual ball she gives at Christmas-time she has mumbled to her three daughters, "Give you each a dollar if you wear white." These sisters have a Jane Austen quality in their picture-dresses. No member of this unique family has been known to make a superfluous remark.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Rosen are heads of one of the most united families, living undisturbed by extraneous events, a communal existence devoted almost entirely to the arts. Mrs. Rosen, like a Rossetti angel in Italian Renaissance picture-dresses, weaves music from the ether with the aid of the Terraphin, and each member of her family is an accomplished musician in more conventional ways. Their house has a definite flavour which, like its inhabitants, remains unchanging throughout the years.

Of the *Vogue* set (not Mr. Condé Nast, Mrs. Edna Woolman Chase or Miss Margaret Case, but the people they feature) are the Yuille sisters, whose strong suit is charm. The one that is now Mrs. Carroll Carstairs, with her clinging draperies and page-boy coiffure, always contrives to look beautifully drowned, and is the Undine of New York Society. The Kahn Sisters and Mrs. Betty Shevlin Smith, together with her sister-in-law, Mrs. Shevlin (formerly Mrs. McAdoo), are poised high on the *Vogue* pinnacles. Mrs. Harold Talbott is a Romney type, with the eyes of a thrush and the brilliant colouring of a gypsy. She succeeds in everything she essays, be it steeplechasing in Virginia or organising a Giant Rally for charity. Mrs. Rhinelander Stewart's pale beauty is like the first primrose, and Mrs. William Woodward's daughters are the most beautiful set of sisters, with their

MRS. CORNELIUS VANDERBILT ARRIVING FOR
THE OPENING OF THE OPERA SEASON

FIFTH AVENUE FASHION PARADE

cold uncompromising loveliness. Although the Cushing Sisters originally came from Philadelphia, they, together with Mrs. Howard Cushing, her sister-in-law Mrs. William Emmett, and Mrs. Alan Ryan, are New York's most beautiful amazons.

New York produces the youngest grandmothers, and Mrs. T. Markoe Robertson, a miracle of natural childishness and charm, belonging to no particular group yet fitting perfectly into each, is the common denominator of fascination. Her son and his wife—formerly Miss Priscilla St. George—are the most unspoiled and wealthy young couple in New York. Also a grandmother, and equally vivacious, Mrs. Frederick Freylinghuysen is guilty of such *chic* that it even permeates her food. A handful of men, Prince Serge Obolensky, Mr. William Rhinelander Stewart, Mr. Lytle Hull, Mr. Charles Munn and Mr. John Schiff, have *savoir faire*. Mr. Harry Evans is the most indefatigable dancer, and his Rumba with the Countess di Frasso is practically a marathon dance. Miss Beth Leary's enthusiasm for the things that debutantes enjoy has not flagged for twenty years, and from her voice one would not know that she never smokes cigarettes or drinks to help her through the hours until the early dawn. The entire and vast Leslie family puts a sense of humour as the first essential quality, and they would live through an earthquake or the day of doom without losing touch with their unquenchable gaiety.

New York has few pasteboard invitations. A large party is a rare event, and it is ten years since Mrs. Cobina Wright took the Sherry Netherland Hotel for her annual circus party, surely the most extravagant gesture in recent times, comparable with the Bradley Martin Ball at the Waldorf in the 'nineties. Mr. Condé Nast, an acclaimed host, does not lie back on his reputation, but can be relied upon to give several magnificent parties each year, when his apartment comes into its own, with all the chandeliers lit and the penthouse roof converted into a silvered orangery. The ladies make a point of appearing in their most festive fashions, and all the celebrities come to watch one another or dance to the two bands playing in the ballroom, hung with the Chinese paper from Haddon Hall. Lady Diana Manners, on entering this room at a party given in honour of the *Miracle*, gasped: "Good heavens, I've slept in here."

The number of smaller parties is prodigious. When Mr. Maurice Wertheim, a director of the Theatre Guild, gives one, an enormous Picasso of the Blue Period greets the men as they take off their hats and coats. The masterpieces on the walls ignored, everybody con-

nected with the stage is likely to be drinking champagne, helping themselves to slices of Virginia ham and listening to Ethel Merman, the torch singer, reiterating that "Flying so high with some guy" is her "idea of nothing to do." Miss Katherine Cornell, in tweeds, on her way to or from Sneydens Landing, greets with her well-known: "My Deaawrre" Miss Lynn Fontanne in an unaccountable paradise hat.

Mr. Clifton Webb entertains in an apartment crammed with artificial flowers and fellow-stars, aided by his mother, Mrs. Maybelle Webb, a great character whose favourite parlour-trick is triumphantly to let down her hair, sit on it, or pull it through her skirts. In a corner, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, one of the keenest wits of her day, bemoans the fact that she cannot go home on account of the quarantine regulations. "Moonbeam has made a legend of me, but I couldn't break a little dog's heart." . . . "Miss Braithwaite is having a *tour de force*, but I am forced to tour." At the other end of the room, the Misses Marlene Dietrich, Libby Holman, Mary Pickford, Gloria Swanson (humble but assured), and Mrs. Lillie Havemeyer, sit on the floor, equally entertained by Beatrice Lillie's imitation of her mother answering the telephone during a singing lesson and Roger Davis, my idea of the funniest man in America.

Mr. and Mrs. Reed Vreeland are always an asset at any party. Mrs. Vreeland, possessor of a most strict sense of *chic* and a poetical quality quite unexpected in the world of tough elegance in which she works, gives colour and life to the most commonplace event: "What a bad film," one might remark. "Yes, but I always adoare the noise of rain falling on the screen." To me, beautiful Mrs. Paley in sequins is beautiful Mrs. Paley in sequins, but to Mrs. Vreeland: "My dear, she is a star in the *sky*." A swarthy brunette may seem ordinary to me, but to Mrs. Vreeland she is "exceptional, my dear, she's wonderful! A wonderful sulky slut"; and her description of Raphael's "La Belle Ferronnière" is original: "Ow, it's turrerriffirck, it's all balustrades, it's turrerriffirck. Everybody's out after the stag, everybody's having such a time, my dear. It's all very *bouillant*, it'd stop a clock."

Ten years have passed since that monumental character, Mr. Robert Chanler, died; scattering into isolation is the Bohemian group which remembers wistfully those spontaneous but nevertheless sensational parties, when, every night, poets, painters and writers feasted and drank at his circular table with its revolving dumb-waiter, on which were piled foods and wines for a medieval banquet. Every Saturday evening, however, Mr. and Mrs. Kirk Askew invite certain inhabitants of

the young art-world to their house. They comprise the painters, Eugene Berman, Chirico, Tchelitchew, Sir Francis Rose and other owners of rival picture-galleries—the Julian Levys, the Valentine Dudensings and the Pierre Matisses. Mr. and Mrs. Everett Austin, from the Hartford Museum, sit around talking to their friends, the James Sobys, and a young lady of great promise, Miss Ruth Ford (something like a Japanese doll with a Mississippi "Snow White" voice). Another circle of intellectuals are invited by Messrs. Glenway Westcott, the writer, George Platt Lynes, the photographer and Munroe Wheeler, who has that afternoon been over to Brooklyn to visit Miss Marianne Moore, one of the most interesting and elusive of modern American poets.

Of the parties I remember enjoying the most, the dinner Mrs. Harrison Williams gave before the first Opera Ball, with the ladies in 1860 crinolines and the men in a variety of uniforms, was an unforgettable spectacle.

Mrs. Sheldon Whitehouse, in the untouched and untouchable house of her mother, gave a ball, Edwardian in its conventional magnificence, with coat-tails and tulle skirts spinning like tops in a waltz that Balzac would have enjoyed describing.

For supreme squalor, a certain Hallowe'en party in Greenwich Village will always be unsurpassed.

Of Miss Maxwell's parties, her Red and White Ball for Mr. Cole Porter was the greatest achievement, for the Broadway celebrities performed with a spontaneity that dispelled all comparison with a ship's concert; and her Barnyard Frolic had an innocuous gaiety entirely unlike the impression given by the newspapers.

VIII

LAST STRETCH

". . . That I may ſay, and ſay truly," Denton wrote, "that if there be any terreſtial happineſs to be had by people of all ranks, eſpecially of an inferior rank, it muſt certainly be here. . . . where beſides the ſweetneſs of the Air, the Country itſelf ſends forth ſuch a fragran ſmell, that it may be perceived at Sea before they can make the Land: where no evil fog or vapour doth no ſooner appear, but a North-Weſt or Weſterly winde doth immediately diſſolve it, and drive it away. . . .

". . . If there be any terreſtial Canaan, 'tis surely here, where the Land floweth with milk and honey. The inhabitants are bleſt with peace and plenty. . . . Where a Waggon or Cart gives as good content as a Coach; and a piece of their home-made Cloth, better than the fineſt Lawns or richeſt Silks: and though their low-roofed houſes may ſeem to ſhut their doors againſt pride and luxury, yet how do they ſtand wide open to let charity in and out, either to aſſiſt each other, or relieve a ſtranger, and the diſtance of place from other Nations, doth ſecure them from the envious frowns of ill-affected Neighbours, and the troubles which uſually ariſe thence."

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On Thursday, the 24th June, in 1497, John and Sebastian Cabot arrived at New York, but decided not to land, saying, "This is a fine place to visit, but we wouldn't live here for the world." Visitors from Europe, the Orient, Chicago, Kansas City, Houston, Minneapolis, and Boston have not been ashamed to plagiarise this remark. Yet, rightly, New Yorkers are proud of their city, so proud of it that they can be tolerant of criticism. I feel that they will condone frankness in this book. As a topic, New York is constantly on the lips of its citizens, many of whom have seen it largely constructed before their very eyes. New York is the one great city to-day which is not reclining on its laurels. It is ever advancing and, in many ways, advanced. It has constructed a new architecture. It is the great world market of to-day, a centre to which artists, writers and musicians must

necessarily migrate. It contains the greatest banks, railways, stores, shipping-lines and entertainment. It is the one great world city. Goethe said:

> Amerika, du hast es besser
> Als unser Kontinent, der alte,
> Hast keine erfallenen Schlösser
> Und keine Basalte.

In a manner, New York may be said to be the essential America: acutely conscious of itself as an entity and yet composed, as no other city in the world is composed, of a thousand alien elements. On the other hand, the capital of every country in the world is something quite "other" than the country itself, and this may be said even more of America and New York than of England and London, France and Paris, Italy and Rome. In the United States, each State has its capital and its own tradition, while New York represents the cosmopolitan world which is growing up on the western shores of the Atlantic.

New York contains more people than the other eight greatest cities of America combined. In fact, it is only possible for a percentage of the population to be out of doors at the same time. Failures are unminded, everyone must laugh and grow rich in this town built upon commerce. The idle leave it, the *élite* escape from it. Ezra Pound, leader of the young poets, has not returned in twenty-five years.

Keyserling has pointed out that prosperity gives a spiritual background and meaning to the struggle for earthly goods. The rich man is not hated, but admired, by the poor in America; and, as other sects value poverty and lowliness, prosperity is robbed of all odium and is considered the normal condition of God's elect. In fact, this philosopher had a particularly clear vision of New York. He wrote further:

> "Our path to freedom leads over conquered nature. And in fact: where nature is really conquered the possibility of freedom appears automatically. This is proved by New York, proved by the whole of American life wherever it has found perfect expression. In America precisely the ideal of the Indians is attained by the precisely opposite way. Life here in general, compared with that in Europe, is essentially simplified, although more importance is attached to comfort here than there, and although it is far more widespread: what is superfluous is eliminated as far as possible; what is essential is obtained by the most economical means."

The cultural civilisation of a people is judged by its art. Clemenceau (was it?) said that "the Americans had passed from a state of barbarism to decadence, without the customary interim of civilisation." Oscar Wilde said that "the Americans are not uncivilised, as they are often said to be, they are decivilised." But, judging by its art, civilisation here has reached only to the appreciation of music, most primitive of the arts. If it has produced no serious composer, it has proclaimed Toscanini the genius of the age.

Of the painters, Thomas Eakins has, for me, the finest aestheticism. His Nocturnes, with isolated figures in trappers' caps, perhaps with a cat, in slowly moving skiffs on a colourless water, have a tender poesy lacking in many American painters. Early Colonial pictures by unknown naïves have national charm and sincerity, and in this tradition was John Kane, the Pittsburg miner, whose loss of a leg, causing him to turn from miner to painter, gained for the country its most important primitive. His self-portrait might even be compared with the work of Matthias Grünewald. The bird pictures of the exotic John James Audubon are astounding not only on account of their ornithological detail, but also for their fantastic variety and technical skill. These three, together with Eilchemius, are America's best painters: but it cannot be said that "greatness" is a quality to which any of them have aspired.

Public opinion to-day is too much interested in reality and money, with no time for dreams. The standard of the He-man prevails, and his puritan extraction influences his attitude towards the artist with his "weak and shocking freedom in ideas and morals." For this reason, the artist does not possess the assurance he deserves, and the racket of the Society Gentleman, perpetrating worthless vulgarities under the guise of portrait-painting, prevails. With the educational and encouraging attitude of the Government in commissioning vast murals, Ben Shahn and other young Americans now paint for the people—a healthy antidote to the decadence in France, where no painter is given a chance for big work, and is used for a succession of personal portraits, to be painted as small as possible so that the fee shall be likewise proportionate.

New York is always appreciative of achievement. Dr. Alexis Carrel is acclaimed by a population that cannot understand the simplest of his writings, and Dr. Einstein is more fêted than a film star. So it is with any great new liner. I came to America on the *Queen Mary's* first voyage, and, like everyone else aboard, was emotionally

touched by the magnificent welcome and the reception of the crowds standing forty deep along the Battery. Aeroplanes swooped with alarming ferocity and deafening noises to drop roses. The air became uncanny with the cheers of humanity, the screams of hooters, the roar of engines and the crash of bands. The fire-boats produced a fountain effect like the Versailles *grands-eaux*, and the air was filled with confetti as the skyscraper windows belched forth paper, fluttering as if flocks of doves had been released.

Life is never free and easy in New York. One has too little to do or much too much. In no other city must existence be planned so carefully. Not to go out is to be forgotten, but one invitation accepted leads to a dozen more. Celebrities have to become iron-ruled in feeling under an obligation to no one, especially so at cocktail-time. New York has too many cocktail acquaintances, and half the time people go out against their will and overtired.

Yet one has the impression of being in much closer contact with everyday events in New York. The daily routine is more easily dispensed with. Everyone is more available and on hand. Somehow or other, everybody knows where and how the other person is spending his day and, without instructions having been left, you are successfully tracked down by the telephone, even in the obscure restaurant that has been chosen for lunch. In Paris, to make a telephone call is an event. Here, telephoning is as easy as breathing. No wrong numbers, no waiting, no pressing of Button A and B. Only for a minute has the man in the straw boater abandoned his Cola, as he drops in the coin, dials, speaks in monosyllabic undertones and is back at the counter while the coin tinkles to its resting-place, and a dying flutter of metal denotes that another telephone call has been made.

In no other country are there so many fans, autograph-hunters, beggars, anonymous letter-writers and nuisances who have nothing better to do than worry celebrities. To acquire any sort of fame or notoriety is to become the target of these cranks.

Not only is it unwise, and even dangerous, to be listed in the telephone book, it has come to be considered inelegant. Often a mistake is made in jotting down an address. Already late for dinner, one arrives at the wrong house, where a German cook, afraid of gangsters, slams the door in one's face. A visit to the nearest drug-store will entail the difficulties of telephoning to someone who *may* know someone who will very *likely* know the required address. Since everyone is already out to dinner, perhaps you may never discover that, instead of

going to 175 East 73rd Street, you should have gone to 173 East 75th Street.

In a city made up of so many nationalities and races, dangers lurk in everyday activities. It is difficult not to offend someone present when expressing an opinion in public. One can even reap a whirlwind (as I unfortunately discovered) by using a slang word of which one does not appreciate the full implications. One of the most beautiful Irish plays, Synge's *Playboy of the Western World,* was at first refused Broadway production as being considered unflattering to the American-Irish. The Jews have objected to the production of *Loyalties* and even of *The Merchant of Venice.*

The decimal system simplifies money transactions, but, for the stranger, it is difficult to believe that a nickel, though a much larger coin, is worth only half a dime. Money in New York has oddly different values. A gardenia may cost ten cents, but an orchid five dollars. A nickel is charged for a forty-eight mile ride on the subway. Twenty-five cents will buy an excellent lunch at an automat, but, at more expensive restaurants, as much as $2.50 is charged for one dish, and the equivalent of £1 per person can be spent even at lunch without wine. In London, practically nowhere could the charges be so high. Again, a champagne dinner for two at a night-club in New York (and one need not be a member to be admitted) might easily cost £8. A man's leather jacket, £10 in London, can be had for $5.00 at the Army and Navy Stores on Broadway. However, if clothes are tailor-made, they cost twice as much as in London. Whereas eighteen guineas is the average for tails in London, $200.00 is a normal price in New York.

For what does one remember New York afterwards?

Most of all for its vast dimensions—the straight avenues ending in the sky, as they pursue some ultimately significant horizon.

The stars at night above the city, like an old-fashioned pin-prick view with a candle behind, where every skyscraper is a constellation, every building a solar system of lights.

Radio City at night, standing silent and unlit: of immeasurable size, its enormous towers coloured gently by the lights of Fifth Avenue —grey stone looking unreal like cardboard in a stage setting.

The smell of the ozone, the ghostly wails of old boats passing down the Island, and the opalescent skies. The dry cold of the streets and the warmth of the houses in winter. In summer, the cool indoors.

The fascination of hearing road-menders, shopkeepers, people in

the street, speaking unrecognisable European languages, yet completely at home, having been born here and lived here since. The biggest city of the Anglo-Saxon world has a Mayor called Fiorello La Guardia!

No economies. Where "waste not want not" is never heard. Never a "clean up your plate," never an old car, never a horse and cart. Heels are never heeled, the shoes are thrown away.

The elevator, going up and down like the mercury in a typhoid's thermometer, decorated with French *boiseries*, Renaissance brocades and an El Greco.

The painted, artificially smiling corpses laid out among the ferns in the Funeral Parlours.

The swift traffic sweeping down Park Avenue.

The shrill mountain wind, moaning outside the windows of a skyscraper room.

On still nights the deep hooting of trains up the Hudson.

The nice things people have said, instead of getting angry. (A friend of mine was sick on New Year's Eve into an apartment-house courtyard sixteen stories below. A voice came up in reproof: "Say, Buddy, will you *try* and keep it upstairs?")

That most magical moment of the day when the buildings around Central Park are still visible in a blue mist, the lights simultaneously shining at every window.

And finally, the friendliness, hospitality and courageous cheerfulness of the citizens of a city which in itself is so soulless and cheerless.

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